

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY
OF
LIVERPOOL,
DURING THE
NINETY-FOURTH SESSION, 1904-1905.
No. LVIII.



LIVERPOOL:
D. MARPLES & CO., LORD STREET.
—
1905.



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NOTICE.

With the present issue the Society's publications for 1904-05 are complete. Members wishing to have the entire set (eight units) bound, must please send their copies to the Hon. Secretary, at 48 Canning Street, Liverpool.

2nd October, 1905.

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CONTENTS.

LIST OF PRESIDENTS.

COUNCIL.

LIST OF ORDINARY MEMBERS.

" HONORARY MEMBERS.

TREASURER'S ACCOUNT.

REPORT AND PROCEEDINGS—SESSION XCIV.

LIST OF PRESIDENTS

FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE SOCIETY IN 1812.

1812	REV. THEOPHILUS HOULBROOKE.
1817	WILLIAM ROSCOE.
1831	THOMAS STEWART TRAILL, M.D.
1833	JOSEPH BROOKS YATES, F.S.A.
1839	REV. JAMES MARTINEAU, LL.D.
1840	REV. THOS. TATTERSHALL, D.D.
1843	JOSEPH BROOKS YATES, F.S.A.
1846-7, 47-8, 48-9	REV. JAMES BOOTH, LL.D., F.R.S.
1849-50, 50-1, 51-2	JOSEPH BROOKS YATES, F.S.A.
1852-3, 53-4, 54-5	JOSEPH DICKINSON, M.A., M.D., F.R.S.
1855-6	ROBERT MCANDREW, F.R.S., F.L.S.
1856-7, 57-8, 58-9	THOMAS INMAN, M.D.
1859-60, 60-1, 61-2	REV. HENRY HUGH HIGGINS, M.A.
1862-3	WILLIAM IHNE, PH.D.
1863-4, 64-5, 65-6	JAMES A. PICTON, F.S.A.
1866-7, 67-8, 68-9	REV. C. D. GINSBURG, LL.D.
1869-70, 70-1, 71-2	J. BIRKBECK NEVINS, M.D.
1872-3, 73-4, 74-5	ALBERT JULIUS MOTT, F.G.S.
1875-6, 76-7	JAMES A. PICTON, F.S.A.
1877-8, 78-9	JOHN J. DRYSDALE, M.D., M.R.C.S.
1879-80, 80-1	SIR EDWARD R. RUSSELL.
1881-2, 82-3,	EDWARD DAVIES, F.C.S., F.I.C.
1883-4, 84-5	RICHARD STEEL, J.P.
1885-6, 86-7	WILLIAM CARTER, LL.B., M.D., B.Sc.
1887-8, 88-9	JAMES BIRCHALL.
1889-90	REV. HENRY HUGH HIGGINS, M.A.
1890-1, 91-2	B. L. BENAS, J.P.
1892-3, 93-4	Principal RENDALL, M.A., Litt.D.
1894-5, 95-6	J. BIRKBECK NEVINS, M.D.
1896-7	JOHN NEWTON, M.R.C.S.
1897-8, 98-9	RICHARD J. LLOYD, D. Lit., M.A., F.R.S.E.
1899-1900	REV. E. N. HOARE, M.A.
1900-1	JOHN MURRAY MOORE, M.D., M.R.C.S., F.R.G.S.
1901-2, 02-3	REV. E. A. WESLEY, M.A.
1903-4, 04-5	REV. W. E. SIMS, A.K.C.L.

COUNCIL.

 SESSION XCIV, 1904-1905.

President :

REV. W. E. SIMS, A.K.C.L.

Ex-Presidents :

Rev. C. D. GINSBURG, LL.D.

SIR EDWARD R. RUSSELL.

EDWARD DAVIES, F.C.S.,
F.I.C.

RICHARD STEEL, J.P.

WILLIAM CARTER, LL.B.,
M.D., B.Sc., Univ. Lond.,
F.R.C.P., Lond.

B. L. BENAS, J.P.

Rev. G. H. RENDALL, M.A.,
Litt. D.JOHN NEWTON, M.R.C.S.,
RICHARD J. LLOYD, M.A.,
D.Lit., F.R.S.E.

Rev. E. N. HOARE, M.A.

J. MURRAY MOORE, M.D.,
F.R.G.S.

Rev. E. A. WESLEY, M.A.

Vice-President :

A. THEODORE BROWN.

Honorary Treasurer :

J. W. THOMPSON, B.A.

Honorary Secretary :

EDWARD G. NARRAMORE, L.D.S., ENG.

Honorary Librarian :

ALFRED W. NEWTON, M.A.

Council :

R. C. JOHNSON, F.R.A.S.

MRS. SEPHTON.

RICHARD EASTLEY.

VICTOR E. E. NEVINS.

J. W. RENNIE.

W. W. JONES.

A. E. HAWKES, M.D.

JAMES T. FOARD.

MARK HINCHLIFF.

MISS ELLEN RYE.

ORDINARY MEMBERS

ON THE SOCIETY'S ROLL AT THE CLOSE OF THE 94TH SESSION.

Life Members are marked with an asterisk ().**Associates are marked with a dagger (†).*

- Oct. 1, 1894 Alcock, Chas., Royal Insurance Co., 1 North
John-street
- †Nov. 14, 1904 Archer, R. S., M.D., A.B. (Trinity College,
Dublin), 15 *St. Domingo-grove*
- †Nov. 14, 1904 Archer, Mrs., 15 *St. Domingo-grove*
- Nov. 13, 1876 Ball, Geo. Henry, 15 *Gambier-terrace, Hope-
street*
- Dec. 10, 1866 Benas, Baron Louis, J.P., 5 *Princes-avenue*,
EX-PRESIDENT
- Jan. 9, 1882 Benas, Phineas A., 5 *Princes-avenue*
- Oct. 7, 1895 Bramwell, Miss, Eye and Ear Infirmary,
Myrtle street
- Oct. 31, 1892 Brown, A. Theodore, *The Nunnery, St. Michael's Hamlet*, VICE-PRESIDENT
- Oct. 18, 1869 Brown, J. Campbell, D.Sc., F.C.S., Professor
of Chemistry, University of Liverpool, 8
Abercromby-square
- Nov. 3, 1862 Cameron, John, M.D., F.R.C.P., Physician
to the Royal Southern Hospital, 4 *Rodney-
street*
- Oct. 1, 1894 Candlin, W. J., 48 *Prussia-road, Hoylake*
- March 4, 1872 Carter, W., M.D., B.Sc., LL.B. (Lond.),
F.R.C.P. (Lond.), 78 *Rodney-street*, Ex-
PRESIDENT
- Dec. 10, 1900 Chaytor, Rev. H. J., M.A., Merchant Taylors'
School, 21 *Alexandra-road, Crosby*

- Oct. 10, 1904 Cooke, Bancroft, J.P., *Oakhill Lodge, Broad Green-road*
- Oct. 20, 1902 Crawford, Mrs., *40 Rodney-street*
- Nov. 12, 1883 Daly, Chas., *Northern Assurance-chambers, Tithebarn-street*
- Dec. 10, 1883 Davey, Wm. J. (Messrs. Elder Dempster & Co.), *African-chambers, Water-street, and Holmleigh, Grassendale*
- Nov. 28, 1892 Douglas, Robert R., *Greenfields, Little Sutton*
- Nov. 18, 1889 Duncan, W. A., *Great Charlotte-street*
- Nov. 14, 1887 Eastley, Richard, Superintendent, Metre Department, Liverpool United Gas Light Co., *8 Promenade, Egremont*
- March 21, 1870 Edwards, Edward E. (Smith, Edwards & Co.), *20 Chapel-street*
- †Oct. 24, 1904 Edwards, Mrs. F. W., *7 Bertram-road, Sefton-park*
- Oct. 5, 1891 Fletcher, J. H., *17 Tarleton-street*
- *Mar. 19, 1885 Foard, James Thomas, *21 Lancaster-road, Birkdale*
- Oct. 29, 1888 Forster, Walter P., *17 Tarleton-street*
- *Dec. 12, 1892 Gladstone, R. Junr, B.C.L., M.A., *Vale-road, Woolton*
- Oct. 29, 1877 Green, Robt. Frederick, *66 Whitechapel*
- Oct. 17, 1899 Griffiths, Miss Nelly, *20 Salisbury-road, Wavertree*
- Oct. 17, 1892 Harley, George, *1 Water-street*
- Oct. 1, 1894 Hawkes, A. E., M.D., *22 Abercromby-square*
- Jan. 7, 1895 Higgins, Miss Maud Longuet, *79 Bedford-street, South*
- Oct. 17, 1898 Hinchliff, Mark, *43 Borrowdale-road, Smith-down-road*
- Nov. 12, 1894 Hoare, Rev. Edward N., M.A., *The Vicarage, Oak-hill Park, Old Swan, EX-PRESIDENT*
- Oct. 30, 1893 Holt, Alfred, *Crofton, Sudley-road, Aigburth*

- *Dec. 14, 1862 Holt, Robert Durning, J.P., 54 *Ullet-road*
 March 10, 1879 Hughes, John W., *Allerton*
 Oct. 4, 1897 Jackson, J. Hampden, F.R.G.S., F.C.I.S.,
Westdene, New Brighton, VICE-PRESIDENT
 Nov. 2, 1903 Jacob, Albert E., M.A. (Dublin), *Brentwood*,
Grassendale Park
 Jan. 26, 1863 Johnson, Richard C., F.R.A.S., 7 *Sweeting-*
street
 Feb. 24, 1868 Jones, Charles W., J.P., *Allerton Beeches*,
Allerton
 April 29, 1889 Jones, Morris P., J.P., *Airlie House, Hoylake*
 Oct. 1, 1894 Jones, J. Stevenson, *Abercromby-square*
 Oct. 17, 1892 Jones, William W., 7 *James-street*
 Feb. 4, 1895 Lawson, George, 23 *Canning-street*
 Jan. 21, 1901 Lee, Chas. George, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., 11
Princes-avenue
 Dec. 10, 1894 Lee, John, B.A., 9 *Cecil-road, Prenton*
 *Dec. 11, 1871 Leigh, Richmond, M.R.C.S., L.S.A., *Reitz*,
Orange River Colony, S. Africa
 Jan. 11, 1897 MacCunn, Prof. J., M.A., LL.D., 20 *Croxtheth-*
road
 Oct. 30, 1882 McMaster, John Maxwell, 19 *Castle-street*
 Nov. 17, 1873 Mellor, James, *Weston, Blundellsands*
 Dec. 14, 1874 Mellor, John, *Rutland House, Nicholas-road*,
Blundellsands
 Oct. 16, 1893 Moore, J. Murray, M.D., F.R.G.S., 51
Canning-street, EX-PRESIDENT
 Jan. 31, 1898 Monsarrat, Keith W., M.B., F.R.C.S.E., 11
Rodney-street
 March 6, 1882 Morton, George Henry, 14 *Grove-park*
 *Oct. 21, 1867 Muspratt, E. K., *Seaforth-hall, Seaforth*
 Nov. 26, 1900 Narramore, Edward G., L.D.S., Eng., 48
Canning-street, HON. SECRETARY
 Oct. 1, 1894 Nevins, J. Ernest, M.B., Lond., 32 *Princes-*
avenue
 Jan. 7, 1895 Nevins, Victor E. E., 32 *Princes-avenue*

- Nov. 2, 1896 Newton, Alfred William, M.A., 82 *Mulgrave-street*, HON. LIBRARIAN
- Feb. 6, 1865 Newton, John, M.R.C.S., 2 *Princes-gate*,
EX-PRESIDENT
- Feb. 23, 1903 Ogden, Thomas, *Chieveley, Blundellsands*
- Oct. 2, 1899 Ogden, W. B., 16 *Howard-drive, Cressington*
- Nov. 2, 1885 Oulton, Wm., J.P., *Hillside, Gateacre*, and
Albert-building, 22 Preesons-row
- Oct. 1, 1894 Parry, Joseph, C.E., *Woodbury, Waterloo-park, Waterloo*
- Nov. 14, 1904 Paterson, Rev. F. G., *Prescot*
- Nov. 4, 1861 Philip, Thomas D., *Weldon, Bidston*
- *Nov. 17, 1851 Redish, Joseph Carter, *Lyceum, Bold-street*
- Oct. 31, 1881 Rennie, J. W., 125 *Roslyn-street, St. Michael's Hamlet*
- Jan. 22, 1872 Russell, Sir Edward, *Daily Post Office, Victoria-street*, EX-PRESIDENT
- Oct. 15, 1894 Rutherford, Arthur, B.A., 41 *Castle-street*
- Nov. 12, 1883 Rutherford, William Watson (Messrs. Miller, Peel, Hughes, Rutherford & Co.), 41 *Castle-street*
- Dec. 12, 1892 Rye, Miss Ellen L., *Bedford College, Bedford-street*
- March 19, 1866 Sephton, Rev. John, M.A., 90 *Huskisson-street*
- Oct. 15, 1883 Sephton, Mrs., 90 *Huskisson-street*
- Oct. 18, 1897 Shelley, Roland J. A., *Seymour-road, Broad-green*
- Oct. 31, 1898 Sims, Rev. W. E., A.K.C.L., *The Vicarage, Aigburth*, PRESIDENT
- Nov. 2, 1903 Sims, Mrs. W. E., *The Vicarage, Aigburth*
- April 4, 1870 Smith, James, 37 *North John-street*
- Feb. 23, 1863 Smith, J. Simm, 4 *Bramley-hill, Croydon*
- Nov. 18, 1878 Steel, Richard, J.P., 18 *Hackins-hey*, EX-PRESIDENT
- †Oct. 10, 1904 Symes, Chas., Ph.D., 53 *Canning-street*

- *Feb. 19, 1865 Taylor, John Stopford, M.D., Aberdeen,
F.R.G.S., 6 *Grove-park, Liverpool*
- Oct. 4, 1897 Thomas, A. P., LL.D., 8 *Harrington-street*
- Oct. 21, 1878 Thompson, J. W., B.A., Lond. and Victoria,
19 *Castle-street*, HON. TREASURER
- Jan. 25, 1892 Turton, William, 13 *Mulgrave-street*
- Jan. 23, 1905 Trew, Percy, 38 *Russell-road, Sefton Park*
- Oct. 1, 1900 Twigge, Miss E. A., *Halewood*
- Oct. 1, 1900 Twigge, Miss M. F., *Halewood*
- Nov. 30, 1896 Wesley, Rev. Edmund Alfred, M.A., 93
Chatham-street, EX-PRESIDENT
- Nov. 4, 1901 Wesley, Mrs., 93 *Chatham-street*
- April 1, 1901 Wilberforce, Prof. L. R., 5 *Ashfield-road*,
Aigburth
- Nov. 17, 1884 Wortley, Wm., *Walton Grange, Walton*
- Nov. 2, 1903 Young, John, *Edenhurst, Mersey-avenue*,
Aigburth
- Nov. 2, 1903 Yongg, Mrs. John, *Edenhurst, Mersey-avenue*,
Aigburth

HONORARY MEMBERS.

LIMITED TO FIFTY.

- 1.—1865 Sir Edward J. Reed, K.C.B., F.R.S., M.P., *Hextable, Dartford, Kent*
- 2.—1865 Cuthbert Collingwood, M.A., M.B., F.L.S., 69 *Great Russell-street, London, W.C.*
- 3.—1870 Lord Avebury, F.R.S., etc., 2 *St. James's-square, London*
- 4.—1870 Professor Sir Henry E. Roscoe, F.R.S., etc., Owens College, *Manchester*
- 5.—1870 Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker, M.D., F.R.S., etc., *The Camp, Sunnyside, Berks*
- 6.—1870 The Rev. Christian D. Ginsburg, LL.D., *Virginia Waters, Berks*, EX-PRESIDENT
- 7.—1877 The Earl of Crawford and Balcarres, F.R.S., Foreign Secretary of R.A.S., etc., 9 *Grosvenor-square, London*
- 8.—1877 Albert C. N. Günther, M.A., M.D., Ph.D., *Kew*
- 9.—1877 Dr. Leidy, Academy of Science, *Philadelphia*
- 10.—1877 Dr. Franz Steindachner, Royal and Imperial Museum, *Vienna*
- 11.—1877 The Rev. H. B. Tristram, M.A., LL.D., F.R.S., Canon of Durham, The College, *Durham*
- 12.—1881 The Rev. W. H. Dallinger, D.D., LL.D., F.R.S., F.R.M.S., *Ingleside, Lee, London, S.E.*
- 13.—1897 Henry Longuet Higgins (care of Messrs. Ashurst, Morris, Crisp & Co.), 17 *Throgmorton-street, London, E.C.*
- 14.—1899 Rev. G. H. Rendall, M.A., Litt.D., *Charterhouse School, Godalming*, EX-PRESIDENT

- 15.—1901 Rev. Walter William Skeat, Litt.D., LL.D.,
D.C.L., Ph.D., Professor of Anglo-Saxon,
Cambridge, since 1878, 2 *Salisbury Villas*,
Cambridge
- 16.—1901 Richard Garnett, LL.D., C.B., 27 *Tanza-road*,
Parliament-hill, London, N.W.
- 17.—1903 E. Davies, F.C.S., F.I.C., 28 *Chapel-street*

HONORARY TREASURER'S ACCOUNT, SESSION 1903-4.

Dr.

The LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY OF LIVERPOOL.

Cr.

RECEIPTS.

	£	s.	d.
1903.			
To Balance in Bank from 1902-3	15	1	7
" Subscriptions, viz. :—			
71 at £1 1 0	£74	11	0
12 at 0 10 6	6	6	0
Arrears	80	17	0
" Sale of Volumes	10	10	0
" Bank for Interest	1	1	6
"	0	10	3

£108 0 4

To Balance in the Bank £35 9 5

PAYMENTS.

	£	s.	d.
1903.			
By Purchase of Vol. 40 to complete set	0	4	0
" Hire of Lantern for Lectures	4	1	6
" Refreshments	19	3	8
" Printer for Volume, 1903-4	18	6	0
" Stationery, Printing Circulars, &c.	14	16	11
" Hon. Treasurer's Expenses	2	18	0
" Hon. Secretary's Expenses	0	19	8
" Hon. Librarian's Expenses	0	1	2
" Rent to Royal Institution	12	0	0
" Balance in the Bank	35	9	5

£108 0 4

Examined and found correct,

R. C. JOHNSON, }
RD. EASTLEY, } *Auditors.*

10th October, 1904.

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

LIVERPOOL

LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

NINETY-FOURTH SESSION, 1904-05.

ROYAL INSTITUTION, LIVERPOOL.

ANNUAL MEETING.

The Annual Meeting of the Society was held at the Royal Institution, on 10th October, 1904.

Rev. W. E. Sims, A.K.C.L., President, occupied the chair.

The following Report of the retiring Council was read and adopted:—

REPORT.

The Council has pleasure in presenting to the Society the Annual Report for the Ninety-third Session, 1903-4. During that period thirteen ordinary meetings were held in addition to the Annual Meeting, at which the President, the Rev. W. E. Sims, A.K.C.L., delivered an address on "Early Victorian Literature."

The various papers read during the Session were in character and interest fully equal to those which have maintained the reputation of the Society in previous years. Among them were two Shakespearean contributions of exceptional merit—"On the Study of Shakespeare," by

Professor Elton, and "The Apocrypha of Shakspeare," by Mr. James T. Foard.

One of the meetings, at which tea was provided by our friendly host, was held in the Physics Theatre of the University, by the kind invitation of Professor Wilberforce, who delivered a lecture on "Radium," characterised by lucidity of statement, brilliancy of exposition, and illustrated by many interesting experiments.

The average attendance during the Session was 51, and the Council regrets that frequently papers of considerable value failed to secure an attendance proportionate to their real importance.

The proposed Dinner was not held in consequence of the difficulty of completing the necessary arrangements at a sufficiently early date in the Session.

During the year, Volume LVII of the Society's *Transactions* was printed; and, before its close, a revision of the Laws, undertaken by a Sub-Committee at the request of the Council, was completed, approved by the Council, recommended for adoption at an Extraordinary Meeting of the Society summoned for the purpose, and confirmed by a second Extraordinary Meeting held in accordance with the terms of the original constitution.

The Council deeply regrets the irreparable loss sustained by the Society through the death of Mr. James Birchall; for forty years one of its most active members; for twenty-one years its Honorary Secretary; and in 1887-8-9, its President. During his long connection with the Society, Mr. Birchall contributed many valuable papers, chiefly upon subjects of Historical and Antiquarian interest, and the success of the Society for many years has been largely the result of the ripe experience and practical sagacity he devoted to its welfare. The Council also regrets to announce the death of a distinguished honorary

member, Dr. Isaac Roberts, F.R.S., F.G.S., F.R.A.S., a contributor of communications of scientific value and importance.

In conclusion, the Council ventures to hope that all members of the Society will endeavour to extend the sphere of its usefulness by drawing public attention to the advantages and privileges of membership, by attending its meetings with regularity, and by contributing their knowledge and experience to the discussions.

The Treasurer's accounts were submitted and adopted.

Under the revised Laws, the following officers were elected for the ensuing session:—Vice-President, Mr. A. Theodore Brown. Hon. Treasurer—Mr. J. W. Thompson, B.A., re-elected. Hon. Librarian—Mr. A. W. Newton, M.A., re-elected. Hon. Secretary—Mr. Edward G. Narra-more, L.D.S., Eng., re-elected.

The following members were elected to serve on the Council in place of six retiring members:—Miss Ellen Rye and Mr. James T. Foard.

ORDINARY MEETINGS.

II. 24th October, 1904. The President, Rev. W. E. Sims, A.K.C.L., occupied the chair. Mr. R. F. Green read a paper entitled "Liberty: Social, Political, and Religious."

III. 14th November, 1904. The President, Rev. W. E. Sims, A.K.C.L., occupied the chair. Rev. H. J. Chaytor, M.A., read a paper entitled "Literary Criticism among the Troubadours, and its influence upon Dante." The Rev. J. T. Mitchell, President of the Italian Literary Society, opened the discussion which followed.

IV. 28th November, 1904. The President, Rev.

W. E. Sims, A.K.C.L., occupied the chair. Mr. W. E. Plummer, M.A., F.R.A.S., read a paper entitled "Earthquakes and the method of their registration." The paper was illustrated by lantern slides.

V. 12th December, 1904. The Vice-President, Mr. A. Theodore Brown, occupied the chair. Professor J. MacCunn M.A., LL.D., read a paper entitled "Aristotle's *Ethics*." Mr. A. W. Newton, M.A., opened the discussion.

VI. 23rd January, 1905. The President, Rev. W. E. Sims, A.K.C.L., occupied the chair. Mr. James T. Foard read a paper entitled "Sir Walter Raleigh's claims as a Poet."

VII. 13th February, 1905. The President, Rev. W. E. Sims, A.K.C.L., occupied the chair. Mr. Bancroft Cooke, J.P., read a paper entitled "The Need of a more general Appreciation of Merit in Architecture."

VIII. 27th February, 1905. The President, Rev. W. E. Sims, A.K.C.L., occupied the chair. Mr. A. W. Newton, M.A., read a paper entitled "Some Naval Needs of the Empire." Mr. J. M. McMaster read a paper entitled "Some Military Needs of the Empire."

IX. 13th March, 1905. The President, Rev. W. E. Sims, A.K.C.L., occupied the chair. Rev. E. N. Hoare, M.A., read a paper entitled "Stoics and Marcus Aurelius." The discussion following was opened by Rev. G. Harford.

X. 27th March, 1905. The President, Rev. W. E. Sims, A.K.C.L., occupied the chair. In accordance with the Laws of the Society, the special business of the meeting being the election of the President for the next session, Mr. A. Theodore Brown, Vice-President, was unanimously elected. Mr. G. H. Ball exhibited and explained some specimens of petrified wood from the petrified forests of Arizona. Dr. J. M. Moore showed an autograph letter of Arthur Henry Hallam (1831). Rev.

E. A. Wesley, M.A., read a paper entitled "The Poetry of Algernon C. Swinburne considered critically."

MEMBERS ELECTED DURING THE SESSION.

Mr. Bancroft Cooke, J.P., Rev. F. G. Paterson, Mr. Percy Trew.

ASSOCIATES ELECTED DURING THE SESSION.

Mr. Charles Symes, Ph.D., Mrs. F. W. Edwards, Mr. R. S. Archer, M.D., A.B. (Trin. Coll. Dublin), Mrs. R. S. Archer.

The attendances during the session were as follows:—
Annual Meeting—60 ; 35, 25, 24, 38, 18, 20, 36, 42, 40.

LATER VICTORIAN LITERATURE.

BY REV. W. E. SIMS, A.K.C.L.

THE death of Queen Victoria coincided with the end of the Nineteenth Century, and marks the close of a period which, with more justice than usual, is distinguished as an era by her name. In relation to Literature especially, there is a certain convenience and propriety in the use of the term *Victorian Era*, because the limits of the Queen's reign mark, with some approximation to accuracy, the temporal boundaries of an age of literary activity, characterised by an almost infinite diversity of style, form, and subject matter, yet possessing elements that differentiate it from other periods of strenuous intellectual production. The larger term, "Literature of the Nineteenth Century," would be less discriminative than "Victorian Literature," because obliged to include a variety of compositions, the fruit of ideas that had become obsolete before the accession of the Queen. At that time forces were at work which materially changed the character both of poetry and prose, and the literature of the subsequent sixty years possesses features that have little in common with the productions of the earlier decades of the century.

We have, then, in the Victorian Era, a well-defined period during which was witnessed the rise, progress, maturity and decline of a literature worthy, in various respects, of comparison with many of the most brilliant achievements of letters in the past. Upon a previous occasion, a somewhat detailed consideration was given to the play and interaction of forces which prepared the way

for this development, the outcome of a fusion of two very distinct types of literary creation, the *Classical* and the *Romantic*, the former characterised by perfection of style, but in its later examples betraying exhaustion of thought; the latter exhibiting a prodigal abundance of luxuriant imagination, through the medium of a style flamboyant, if not rococo, in its verbal exuberance.

Literature reflects Life, and gives articulate expression to prevalent thought and feeling, hence the importance it possesses for the social observer, independently of its intrinsic charm. It is the "glass of fashion" in human thinking, or, to vary the metaphor, a thermometer, indicating the mental temperature. The polished trivialities that found acceptance in the last quarter of the Eighteenth century were evidence of a civilisation waning to extinction, and presaged the advent of change. And, equally, the perfervid rhetorical style of the succeeding school, its lax attention to form, indifference to long established canons of taste, nebulous theories of nature, and vague aspirations towards an ideal regenerated social order, bore witness to the great convulsion in which that decaying civilisation ultimately perished.

But at the date of the Queen's accession the revolutionary impulse had spent its force, signs of reaction were abundant, history was preparing to repeat itself in the only way that it ever does, with difference or modification. The tumultuous energies of the Romantic school showed symptoms of abatement, its indifference to form began to excite distaste, the discarded beauty of the Classical style regained appreciation. And, in the new literature that arose, success was achieved in a union of chastened Romanticism with an invigorated Classical spirit. There could be no return to the type of thought that found satisfaction in the puerilities of authorship characteristic

of years immediately preceding the revolution, for the mind of man had been deeply stirred, and the light food of the later Georgian versifiers and essayists was regarded with contempt if not with loathing. On the other hand, false hopes of a speedy millennium, engendered during the progress of the revolutionary fever, vanished as convalescence proceeded, or gave place as men awakened from illusion to expectations of a more sober and reasonable kind; and endeavour was made to realise such better-grounded anticipations of a modest and gradual advance by a more thorough examination of the facts of nature and life.

In every province of enquiry investigators appeared, whose treatment of history contrasted favourably with the *insouciance* displayed by Classical writers, and was comparatively free from the imaginative glamour with which Romantic authors invested the past; and whose interpretation of nature was emancipated from the conventionalism of the latter half of the eighteenth century, amusingly illustrated in much that passed for poetry in a prosaical age, and from the rampant exaggeration which found expression in the hyperbolical language of Romanticists newly awakened to the splendour and glory of the external world.

History was studied with an ever increasing attention to original sources, the documents, monuments, and relics, that bore authentic contemporary witness to the facts. Nature was interrogated with a judicial patience gradually rewarded with knowledge hidden from the foundation of the world. In these and other provinces of investigation, for theoretical assumption was substituted scientific method, with results that have surpassed the prophetic anticipations of Francis Bacon, and even the dreams of magicians.

All this improved application of energy is reflected in and gives a character of its own to the literature of the Victorian age. Take for example the method of writing history. The equipment of the majority of historical authors before that period was slight. Almost all that seemed to be necessary was a taste for reading, supplemented by a few inveterate prejudices, and a facile pen. The historian lightly armed advanced to the adventurous attack of a difficult subject with an airy complacency incredible to anyone acquainted with the real nature of the task. He read any published volumes of previous authors that happened to be within easy reach, and proceeded to rearrange the materials thus acquired in new combinations, incorporating during the process various prepossessions, his only original contribution, and omitting whatever seemed inconsistent with these valuable additions. No fresh light was thrown upon the period discussed, errors of by-gone authorities were stereotyped, and nothing was achieved but the foundation, upon precarious ground, of a new literary reputation. "Do not read history to me," said Walpole, "for that I know must be false; read fiction, for that may be true." But the method of the Victorians involved exhaustive investigation of archives, the patient and minute examination of original documents. A labour of Hercules chastening to the imagination, and feelingly alluded to by Thomas Carlyle, a pioneer of the habit of thoroughness in historical study, in references to Dr. Dryasdust and "foul Lethean quagmires" where lay buried the "authentic utterances of the past." The comparison is not poetically complimentary to the modern historian but involves a real appreciation, when we say that, whereas his predecessor flitted gracefully like a swallow over the surface of a field of enquiry, the latter-day student, shorn of mere

rhetorical wings, burrows like a mole into the heart of his subject.

An illustration of the tendency to superior accuracy has been recently furnished. *Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches, with Elucidations*, by Thomas Carlyle, was justly regarded upon its appearance in 1845 as an epoch-making book. Instead of attending to the panegyrics of friends or the diatribes of enemies, we could listen to the voice of the Lord Protector himself. With infinite patience, at the cost of immense toil, the scattered echoes of that potent voice had been collected. Here were the actual words, the real thoughts of Cromwell disinterred from under piles of accumulated rubbish—sorted, arranged, and elucidated. But lately it has been found necessary to re-edit these letters, and to annotate the annotator; under the search-light of modern criticism, even the work of Carlyle has been seen to bristle, not merely with proofs of prejudice, like the poor, these indications of our fallen nature will probably be “always with us,” but with errors of fact due to insufficient acquaintance with contemporary documents.

When the Queen's reign can be regarded from a coign of vantage sufficiently remote to afford the spectator a view that is comprehensive and free from intrusion of unimportant details, it will probably be generally recognised that among its most notable triumphs were those achieved in the province of history; and in justification of an apparent excursion into the dubious region of prophecy, it may be enough to invite a comparison between the labours of Goldsmith, or even of Hume, and those of Stubbs and Freeman. Rays of light of unprecedented brilliancy have been turned upon the dim shadowy past, and much that had been sunk hitherto in the obscurity of twilight, or lost in the darkness of night, has become

visible, and its meaning intelligible. It is sufficient to select from a host of names those of Macaulay, Carlyle, Freeman, Green, Gardiner, Froude, Stubbs, Creighton and Lecky, and to imagine, if possible, the state of our knowledge, supposing the principal works of these authors had met the fate of the Alexandrian library or the lost books of Livy, in order to realise the extent of the contribution made by Victorian writers to this department of literature. The chief historical works of Carlyle and Macaulay belong to a period anterior to that covered by the title of this paper, but from an imposing array of monumental productions, too extensive even for cursory allusion, one or two may be selected as illustrative of the new method of dealing with history. The names of Edward Augustus Freeman and James Anthony Froude are usually associated in our minds, probably because of the vehemence with which those writers would have repudiated the possibility of any such association. Both occupied the chair of history at Oxford, but, happily for the stability of that throne of learning, not simultaneously. Metaphorically speaking, from the dais arose a fountain of historical waters in succession sweet and bitter, or to use a companion figure, the chair produced in turn figs and thistles. If certain criticisms are credible Froude was deficient in truth, and Freeman lacking in grace. What Froude wrote was not history, and what Freeman wrote was not literature, our choice lying apparently between barren facts and picturesque fiction. Both produced history on the grand scale that presupposes leisure for its perusal. It is said that Freeman's masterpiece takes longer to read than the time that was occupied by the Norman Conquest. But it is ungracious to deny our debt of obligation to either writer. Charges of inaccuracy are easily substantiated against almost every historical writer ;

“to err is human,” and, moreover, there are different *criteria* of truth. Froude’s history may contain slips dangerous to candidates for examination, and reveal bias common enough in people who possess opinions, without deserving the epithet unvarnished. His command of a beautiful style enabled him to paint in words a picture of an important and interesting period, the colours of which are sufficiently true, and the drawing sufficiently accurate, to justify its claim to a position on the line in the gallery of historical art. Freeman’s claim is a different one; if we are permitted to continue the use of metaphor, he was not a painter, but the curator of an extensive and valuable museum, in which were stored for our use and delight treasures of the past previously inaccessible to general public observation.

The judgment of a reader must always be largely determined by the relative importance he attaches to productions belonging to the spheres distinguished by De Quincey as those of the “literature of knowledge” and the “literature of power.” The famous essayist, probably, would have included historical works under the former heading, but it is convenient to use his classification for the purpose of discriminating between historical compositions that are esteemed chiefly for accurate learning, but have small pretension to beauty of style, and those which enjoy a larger popularity because their perhaps equally solid materials are conveyed to us in a form of greater attractiveness, and are more easily capable of mental assimilation. But there is nothing in the nature of the case to necessitate a divorce between these spheres of intellectual activity; and John Richard Green’s *History of the English People* proved the possibility of their intimate union. The friend and disciple of Freeman and Stubbs, he combined with their love of accuracy the command of

a style as brilliant as that of Macaulay, and a power of historical imagination to which neither of those writers could justly lay claim. Additional proof that massive learning is not incompatible with literary grace was afforded by the works of William Edward Hartpole Lecky, who united to seeming omniscience the philosophical capacity of grouping innumerable details with a view of their interpretation as integral parts of a unity clearly perceived from the first, and developed in successive chapters with the precision of a judge engaged in the process of summing up.

Closely allied with history is criticism, the mind that excells in historical investigation is of necessity judicial, the habit of appraising and discounting evidence is a part of the equipment of an historian, and many of those in the period under review have been critics. Hard things have been said of critics and criticism. According to Dean Swift the critic is "a discoverer and collector of writers' faults." Byron says, "a man must serve his time to every trade save censure—critics all are ready-made." "Ten censure wrong," says Pope, "for one who writes amiss," but all these animadversions deal with the abuse rather than the use of criticism. "Criticism is like champagne," remarked Colton, "nothing more execrable, if bad, nothing more excellent, if good." Dr. Johnson reminds us that "criticism, as it was first instituted by Aristotle was meant as a standard of judging well," with which dictum we may compare Matthew Arnold's definition of it as "the endeavour in all branches of knowledge . . . to see the object as in itself it really is." This was an endeavour to which circumstances gave a strong impetus during the Victorian era. An age of intellectual decrepitude, followed by a period of revolutionary excitement, gave place at the Queen's

accession to an era of sober enquiry and keen examination.

Convinced of the inadequacy of the classical ideal as illustrated in its latest developments, and dissatisfied with the exaggerations of Romanticism, the age became critical.

Literary material, perfect in finish, was found wanting in human interest, and what took its place in the next generation was condemned as defective in form. "To see the object as in itself it really is" was the natural desire of an age recovering from illusion, and criticism became inevitable, its operation extending to every department of nature and life.

From a long list of names it is sufficient to select two of the most prominent as examples, and they serve to discourage an extreme application of the theory that an era of criticism cannot synchronise with an age of creation. George Eliot used to say that man was "distinguished from the brutes chiefly by his ability to make false generalisations," and the theory to which allusion is made seems to illustrate that proud distinction. In Matthew Arnold and John Ruskin we have convincing proofs of the possibility of combining the creative and critical faculties. As so frequently happens in an attempt to appreciate Victorian literature, we find authors in juxtaposition when there is no real resemblance. Both were critics of life, but from standpoints widely different. Both were masters of style, but wrote English entirely dissimilar in character. Arnold was a poet, and present indications seem to show that upon poetry his ultimate fame will rest, but his prose was free from poetical intermixture, and reached a level of excellence seldom surpassed in the classical age of which, more than any author with the exception of Landor, he reflected the spirit. Ruskin wrote some verse, but is never included among the poets. He was, some think,

the greatest, and all admit one of the noblest writers of prose in the language, the poetry that is wanting in his verse glowed in sentences and irradiated passages with a splendour rarely found and never sustained to an equal degree in even the most brilliant of the Romanticists with whom Ruskin had strong affinities. Any adequate consideration of the position occupied by Arnold and Ruskin as critics of life would necessitate a preliminary investigation of the very complex social phenomena involved in what Carlyle called "the condition of England question," and carry us too far afield, but it may tend to lucidity if, in the briefest way, we recall to remembrance a few of the more salient facts. The manifold activities that originated in the desire of man to acquire a sounder knowledge of nature, including his own constitution, when the visionary hopes engendered during the revolutionary fever had passed away, were rewarded beyond the dreams of those who first engaged in them. A series of scientific discoveries, unparalleled in human experience, changed the current conceptions of the external world, and modified philosophical and religious beliefs. In almost every department of research revelation outstripped the capacity for its full realisation. The pace was too rapid, and mental dyspepsia waited upon surfeit. To keep up with the continually accelerated advance was impossible. Even those Athenians whose chief desire was to hear or to tell of some new thing would have suffered exhaustion. And that bovine indifference with which a large section of the public regards all matters of intellectual interest, failed in its soothing power, because the discoveries of physical philosophers, which might have been ignored if confined to the region of abstract truth, were made available for practical purposes, and disturbed the equilibrium of ordinary life.

Human machines were replaced by others constructed of metal. The age of industrialism had dawned, and all classes were caught in the eddy. The miracles of discovery and invention were witnessed by the multitude with a dull kind of wonder, and promoted the development of a strong faith in the seen, the tangible, the material, to the detriment of their capacity for realising the invisible which had never been with them a plant of sturdy growth. The Carthaginian spirit, as opposed to the Greek, increasingly flourished. Life, which was the end, was subordinated to the means of living, a wholly subsidiary, if necessary, consideration, and Matthew Arnold sums up the result: "on the side of beauty and taste, vulgarity; on the side of morals and feeling, coarseness; on the side of mind and spirit, intelligence; this is Philistinism." And it was against Philistinism that he waged unceasing war, using as a weapon, if not the sword of the spirit or the battle-axe of an ardent reformer, the rapier of a delicate irony, used with the deadly effect of a master of fence.

The culture upon which he laid so much insistence was not the delicate product of an intellectual greenhouse, incapable of surviving exposure to the common air of life, and *caviare* to all who have not grafted a fastidious sensitiveness upon the stock of a university education, but the wholesome fruit of application to a study of the best thought and speech of the world, a civilising process and the surest antidote to much that is most deplorable in contemporary life and manners. As we read his polished sentences, instinct with peculiar grace, and breathing a spirit of singular charm, we recall as unquestionably applicable to himself his definition of literary genius, "its gift lies in the faculty of being happily inspired by a certain intellectual and spiritual atmosphere, by a certain order of ideas when it finds itself in them, of dealing

divinely with those ideas, presenting them in the most effective and attractive combinations, in short, making with them beautiful works."

The deep seriousness which lay at the root of Arnold's character, and found expression in poetry, lofty, severe, and more than tinged with melancholy, is veiled in his prose. High-bred indifference to great ideals, middle class obscurantism and popular ignorance had a certain seriousness of their own. "The Philistine," as Schopenhauer remarked, "is distinguished by a dull, dry kind of gravity akin to that of animals." It was impossible to roar more loudly than "the young lions of the *Daily Telegraph*." Arnold encountered the solemnity of dulness with an airy wit. The bull in the arena was aroused from torpidity by the smart of innumerable punctures. The elephant was guided into "ways of pleasantness and paths of peace" by the sharp prick of the driver's hook. Arnold's satire enabled the inhabitants of Gaza and Ashdod to realise their want of resemblance to the Children of promise. And the result of his criticism was ameliorative, implanting uneasy misgivings in the breast of hide-bound convention, if not arousing a conviction of sin against sweetness and light.

Ruskin's services to the same cause were rendered in a manner that affords a strong contrast to the method of Arnold, and, although to some extent impaired by the writer's undeniable eccentricities, were even more considerable. According to a recent publication of considerable authority: "It may be said, with little exaggeration, that the legislation of the last thirty-five years has followed haltingly behind the principles asserted by Ruskin in 1860; it may be said with great confidence that these same principles are now the main motive forces of the civic movement of the twentieth century," a statement,

that, if true, serves to show how the paradox of one generation may become the commonplace of the next. Arnold began with poetry, and approached the goal of social criticism through the avenue of literature—the articulate expression of human thought. Ruskin arrived at the same destination by another route, beginning with art. “Moral beauty,” said Victor Cousin, “is the basis of all true beauty. This foundation is somewhat covered and veiled in nature, Art brings it out and gives it more transparent forms.” Or, in the language of Schiller, “Art is the right hand of nature, the latter has only given us being, the former has made us men.” From living art to the art of living, transition is easy, and Ruskin became a critic of life—penetrative, impassioned, and, withal, constructive—laying at least foundations for the superstructure of a nobler social order.

Criticism, when thus elevated and inspired, is akin to Philosophy, the science, as Sir William Hamilton calls it, “of the relations of all knowledge to the necessary ends of human reason ;” and, since reason, according to the definition of Locke, is “the faculty of the mind by which it distinguishes truth from falsehood, and good from evil,” we may enlarge the claim of Philosophy to include what is summarily expressed as the wisdom of life. And when thus expanded, under the title of philosophers, would be included many of the greatest of the Victorians—Carlyle and Newman, as well as Spencer and Martineau. But, as restricted in common use, the term limits consideration to names among which by far the most considerable is Herbert Spencer, whose attempt to co-ordinate the results of modern investigation recalls the proud boast of Bacon that he had taken all knowledge to be his province. It would not be wise to recommend as illustrative of Victorian literature, and indicative of the ordinary resources of the

language, the series of works which embody in a tongue "not understood of the people" the principles of the Synthetical philosophy, but they remain an impressive monument of colossal intellectual power at work upon the herculean task of reducing to some kind of unity the varied and complex forces of an age lacking the control of an overmastering thought, such as inspired the era of the revolution, and disposed to seek in divergent directions the satisfaction of discordant tendencies, and the promotion of apparently inconsistent ideals.

It is not easy precisely to determine what may or may not be permissibly included under the term Philosophy, but custom seems to allow a considerable latitude, fully justified by consideration of the etymological meaning of the word. A philosopher may be a student of physics or a doctor of divinity. A philosophical instrument may be an ingenious mechanical contrivance, or Bacon's *Novum Organum*. It has been said that the Germans raised philosophy to the skies, and the English degraded her to the kitchen. If the title of philosopher is applied to a man, someone is sure to contest his right to the dignity. Coleridge, it is affirmed, was not a philosopher because he was a poet. Newman was not a philosopher because he was a theologian. Matthew Arnold and Carlyle lacked qualification for want of a properly co-ordinated system of thought. But the present audience, at least, will not be disposed to deny that James Martineau, sometime President of this Society, possessed an indefeasible claim to be regarded as a philosopher, and one of the greatest in the Victorian era. A lover of wisdom, well versed in all the learning of the schools, acute, subtle, the master of a consummate style, flexible, nervous, beautiful, he presented the arguments for Christian Theism with a force, a logical consistency, and a spiritual insight rarely found elsewhere.

Unless we eliminate the divine from our conception of philosophy, he must rank with Newman as a chief apologist for those ideas which lie at the basis of all religion, and, whether regarded positively or negatively, colour all human thought.

Theoretically, the passage from philosophy to poetry is smooth and easy. "How charming is divine philosophy," said Milton, "not harsh, nor crabbed, as dull fools suppose, but musical as is Apollo's lute;" and according to Fuller—"Poetry is music in words." The transition, then, from Apollo's lute to Homer's lyre would seem to be simple and natural, but when the strains of Apollo's lute are heard through the medium of John Stuart Mill, Bain, Mansel and Spencer, much of the music is lost, the "native wood notes wild" require discriminative ears for accurate detection. In the larger meaning of philosophy, familiar to an older generation, it is possible, however, to recognise the kinship obscured by our modern limitations of the term. "You arrive at truth through poetry," said Joubert, "and I arrive at poetry through truth." "Poetry and philosophy revolve around the same centre," said Colton, "and differ like comets and fixed stars only in the orbit they describe."

The two great poets of the Victorian age illustrate the intimacy of this alleged relationship. They are at once poets and philosophers. In Tennyson, perhaps, the philosophy is subordinated to the poetry, while in Browning the poetry is alleged to be sometimes less obvious than the philosophy. Both these men were included in the review of the Early Victorians, but their activities lasted throughout the reign, and, with Carlyle, Newman, and Darwin in their various and widely different spheres, they stand as representative of the chief intellectual forces of the time.

Lower down the slopes of the English Parnassus, but

increasingly sure of foothold there, is found Matthew Arnold, and not far off Rossetti, Swinburne, and many more. The poetry of the Victorian era was abundant, and reached a level of distinction surpassed in altitude at only two periods in our history. That it was inferior to the best work of the Elizabethan age in the quality of its texture—and in opulence of imagination showed a decline from the standard attained by the chief Romanticists, is an admission freely conceded—but if you compare an anthology of poems written during the last half of the nineteenth century with any collection of British poets of an earlier date, that includes not merely the great masters but the rank and file, there seems little reason to doubt that the verdict would be given in favour of the modern writers. The range includes fewer lofty peaks, but the average height is greater.

“The gorgeous and beautiful word-spinning of writers like Arthur O’Shaughnessy, Philip Bourke Marston, and those called the Pre-Raphaelite poets is far more like genuine poetry,” says Mr. Watts-Dunton, “than was the worn-out, tawdry texture of eighteenth century platitudes in which Hayley and Samuel Jackson Pratt bedecked their puny limbs.” In the poetry of the later Victorians expression is given, excellent in grace, perfect in form, subtle in suggestion to all the quivering emotions of an age brought into contact with ideas destructive and reconstructive in every province of nature and art, philosophy and life. Its pessimism is reflected in James Thomson. Its piety in Christina Rossetti. Its love of the past in Aubrey de Vere. Its dreams of the future in Gerald Massey. Time would fail to tell of the great cloud of witnesses to the vigour, reality, insight and beauty displayed in the treasures of song, for the most part unheeded, because, like flowers in a Brazilian forest,

their wealth and luxuriance distracts the mind from individual attention to particular blossoms. One of the greatest, not crowned with official wreath of laurel, but wearing the unfading diadem of immortality, lingers yet in our midst, the last survivor of a literary era, but one of many of equal stature in the palmy days of Queen Victoria, alone now in isolated grandeur, like a solitary mountain peak, the Mozart of modern English speech, "Gifted," as was said of that great musician, "with an inexhaustible vein of the richest, purest melody," our chief singer, supreme master of the noblest resources of our language—Algernon Charles Swinburne.

But the most remarkable literary development of the Victorian era took place in the province of fiction. It is the age of the novel. Like Aaron's rod this particular section seems destined to swallow the rest. And the reason is not far to seek. When Caliph Omar destroyed the Alexandrian library, he relied for justification upon the plea that it was an unnecessary institution. If these books were in harmony with the Koran they were useless, if discordant with the teaching of the prophet they were worse than useless. All that is behoved any man to know was contained in the Koran. Why cumber the earth with litter? Bring hither the torch!

In some sections of English life the place of the Koran is taken by the novel. As developed during the last half century it contains all that is necessary for that nebulous entity, the reading public, to know. From its pages are imbibed, in a diluted form, theology, philosophy, science and art. It is a kind of co-operative store or general emporium, providing at a minimum of personal exertion the maximum of intellectual acquisition. Here, without leaving the premises, without going outside the covers, can be secured pabulum for conversation at the dinner

table, specious arguments in support of every literary, artistic and social paradox, and the means of bewildering the curate on the occasion of his next pastoral call. The late Bishop of London, when he visited the Liverpool Athenæum, told the story of "an American engineer, living in Russia, who, being asked his opinion about the Russian people, answered: 'They are very good folks, but they are terribly ignorant. They are ignorant with a downright natural ignorance, and not that ignorance which we carefully cultivate by reading the newspapers.'" Without disputing the just claim of the press to an important share in the work, we use largely in this peculiar educational process the contemporary novel. An eminent critic* has said, "Any comparison of the novels of the Victorian Era with the novels of the Georgian Period must be very much to the disadvantage of the former. The great epoch of English fiction began with Goldsmith and Richardson, and ended with Sir Walter Scott"; and he speaks with some disparagement of more recent efforts, because "they aspire to regenerate mankind." In its origin, the novel, which has a long ancestry, was a narrative intended to interest and amuse, its author had no ulterior purpose, no axe to grind, he gave us a transcript of life, and from an artistic point of view the best novels are those which preserve independence of specific didactic aims. But those influences which we have seen affecting every department of literature in the period under review have been especially active in the domain of fiction. The strenuous endeavour to understand the meaning of nature and life, to penetrate its hidden mystery, to interpret its message, if any—an endeavour which in science has gradually revolutionised our conception of the universe—which in history explains the differ-

* Clement Shorter.

ence between the work of Stubbs and that of Smollett; which in criticism accounts for the gulf separating the early reviewers from Matthew Arnold or Walter Pater; which in poetry has "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought" the face of glad Euterpe, and subdued exuberant song to the level of a metrical philosophy;—these influences, paramount and predominating, creating universal endeavour to get at the heart of things, moral and intellectual, have changed the character of fiction. It has been made the medium of attack upon our prison systems, our courts of law, our private schools, the deceased wife's sister's act, and whatever else seemed to call for mending or ending. It has been made the vehicle for every theory elaborated in the recesses of ingenious brains. From the pages of novels we may not only learn all that can possibly be known of the present, the past, the future, the world that now is and that which is to come, but taking wings of imagination may disport ourselves in the rarefied air of the incredible and absurd at a dizzy distance from the ground of all reasonable probabilities. Most of the work of Dickens, Thackeray, Kingsley, and all the novels of the Brontë sisters belong to the early Victorian period, but that under consideration includes, among a host of others, the writings of George Eliot, Robert Louis Stevenson, and George Meredith, representative authors, whose names we assume that the world will not willingly let die. The late Lord Acton, impressed among other things by the portrait of Savonarola in George Eliot's *Romola*, assigned her a place, after Shakespeare, in the very first rank of English writers; and Tennyson, in a criticism, negative in form, implies almost as much when he says that he "Did not think her so true to nature as Shakespeare and Miss Austen." Gallantry forbids acrimonious objection to the association of that brilliant lady with the greatest man in

literature, and it is easy to understand what Tennyson wished to convey; but the habit of making these kind of comparisons is growing, and needs to be guarded against. It is almost as unsatisfactory as the custom of arranging distinguished authors numerically in class lists, and speaking, for example, of Swinburne as fourth among the poets of the era. We are in danger of being told presently that Augustus Amaryllis, who wrote *Fantasies of Foliage*, is the nearest approach to Shakespeare in treatment of rosemary and rue, and ranks eleventh among the poets of Little Pedlington.

George Eliot furnishes illustration of the distinction that De Quincey drew between the literature of knowledge and the literature of power. Intellectually, her affinities were with scientific research and the somewhat arid type of philosophical theory generated in physical laboratories to form an atmosphere in which to float the results of investigation. But in her novels, more especially the earlier ones, a human sympathy of great depth and tenderness, happily obscured the tendency to abstract disquisition. Her characters are real, drawn from life, pictured as they lived and moved, and had their being in her affectionate retrospect. Humour, said to be rare in woman, enriched her recollections of the provincial life dear to memory and recreated in her pages. It flowed from sympathy, from recognition of the pathos that mingled with the bathos of common-place life. The rustic dance, clownish and absurd, sometimes becomes a dance of death, its comedy transmuted into tragedy. While she drew upon her remembrance of the past, and painted life as she had seen it, her books belonged to the literature of power. But when she left this field and brought theory to the assistance of creation, there was a marked decline in human interest. The rich vein of experience was ex-

hausted, the later books smelled of the lamp, they are contributions to the literature of knowledge, full of scientific and philosophical aphorisms, a mine of apt illustrations, a mosaic of clever sentences, crowded with brilliant characterisations, but deficient in that genial humanity and insight into actual life which encouraged admirers of her early productions to institute what most critics would consider far-fetched comparison with Shakespeare.

Of Robert Louis Stevenson it is difficult to speak before a literary audience without provoking hostility, because, unhappily, language considered adequate by some admirers would seem fulsome to a large majority, and anything short of riotous exuberance of appreciation would appear glaringly defective in other quarters. Probably time will cause this effervescence to subside, and the real Stevenson will be seen in proportions shorn of the magnitude of the shadowy Spectre of the Brocken, but sufficiently great to ensure him permanent recognition among the lofty masters of English prose. His last work, left unfinished, seems to show that envious death deprived us of one who, if longer spared, might have attained in time even the position claimed for him by a limited cult, and endangered perhaps the throne of whatever writer is supposed to reign in this department of letters. But it would appear improbable under the sad circumstances of his premature loss that his fame can enter into serious rivalry with the greatest novelists and essayists of the Victorian era.

If George Meredith had died as Stevenson did, before he was fifty, the *Egoist* would not have been written, and his title to be included in the very front rank of English authors would have been disputed, but length of days has assured the position of the Nestor of Victorian novelists.

Meredith shares with Browning the charge of obscurity. Like the poet, it was probably never his intention in writing to "furnish an idle man with a substitute for a cigar." But many people, whose intellectual penetration is not their chief claim upon our interest and regard, will forgive what they regard as a legitimate lapse into unintelligibility in a poet whose proper domain they conceive is the abstruse and obscure, and even devote labour and patience to the toilsome ascent of a summit believed to command exceptional views of nature or life. A novel, however, is supposed, not without justification derived from experience, to give the kernels of nuts that are cracked elsewhere, and to offer no impediment to rapid assimilation and quick digestion. The famous Mrs. Battle used to unbend her mind over a book. Meredith is disappointing to readers in search of a mild soporific, and incurs the just odium that awaits the daring innovator who, in a class of works not supposed to be addressed to the understanding, has the audacity to endeavour to stimulate thought.

An honoured member of this Society, learned in science, taught us in a brilliant lecture of fascinating interest to see the operation of laws that govern the simple movement of the familiar pendulum in the ebb and flow of the tide, and the vaster rhythm of the stars. It would seem from a study of history that analogous laws are at work in spheres intellectual. There is a rise and fall in mental energy, there is an ebb and flow in human achievement. Especially is this true of that form of intellectual activity which finds expression in literature. There is the swing of the pendulum, there are waves of mental movement and flood-tides of literary production when a height of excellence is attained, or a wealth of material is created unparalleled in the experience of

generations before and after. Such an age was seen in Greece in the fourth and fifth centuries before Christ; in Rome during the century that preceded and the century that followed the advent of the Redeemer; in Italy in the fourteenth; in Spain in the seventeenth; in France in the seventeenth and eighteenth; in Germany in the early part of the nineteenth centuries; in the England of Elizabeth, of Anne, and of Victoria. All of these are well defined periods of exuberant literary vitality, of which the last is by no means the least. A glance at the chronological outlines of English literature in the Queen's reign confirms the impression that it was commensurate with the limits of an era of intellectual activity that has passed away. The one poet of high rank still in our midst was born in the year of the Queen's accession. The one surviving novelist of the first order was a child at that date. A long list might be compiled of authors eminent in every department of literature who were living in 1837, and whose work was yet to come. It was the hour of dawn. The list would include Carlyle, Macaulay, Tennyson, Browning, Ruskin, Arnold, Dickens, Thackeray, George Eliot and Charlotte Brontë, and many others whose genius is the glory of the Victorian age. But as we gradually approach the close of the reign there are visible premonitions of sunset. The ranks of the immortals grow thinner. Memory recalls that tragical scene in the French revolution, when the Girondists stood on the scaffold singing the "*Marseillaise*," and the chorus grew fainter and fainter as the axe continually fell, until at length the voice of Vergniaud was heard alone. It was like that with the great Victorians. The poets, historians, philosophers, statesmen passed one by one from the stage. The last twenty years of the reign were years of loss with few compensating gains. George Eliot died in 1880,

Carlyle and Beaconsfield in 1881, Darwin in 1882, Arnold in 1888, Browning in 1889, Newman in 1890, Kinglake in 1891, Freeman and Tennyson in 1892, Jowett and Tyndall in 1893, Stevenson and Froude in 1894, Huxley and William Morris in 1895, Gladstone in 1898, Ruskin in 1900. The Queen survived them all. It would require much ingenuity, and a large measure of the charity that "hopeth all things and believeth all things," to prepare for the date of the accession of King Edward VII a list of writers who, in either actual or probable achievement, could be mentioned without unkindness as the peers of the great Victorians. No doubt "the future hides in it gladness and sorrow," and a genial optimism prefers to dwell upon the "larger hope," but it seems a counsel of perfection to recommend to those of limited leisure that their attention should be mainly directed in days of comparative sterility to the fat pastures of an age of unusual intellectual fertility, not yet too remote from living interest to satisfy the needs of the modern spirit.

"Of making books," said Solomon, or whatever author the higher criticism considers responsible for the remark, "there is no end," and we regard this observation as distinctly prophetic of the output in novels. Even the assiduous frequenters of those palaces of mental dissipation, erected in the market place of every town by the dollars of transatlantic philanthropy, bend themselves in vain to the task of adjusting demand to supply. Recourse must be had to such similes as the "leaves in Vallombrosa," the "sand of the sea shore," and the "stars of heaven," in an attempt to suggest the numerical abundance of productions that defy computation and exhaust the arithmetical imagination of hardened mathematicians.

What marks the close of a great period of literary energy is not a cessation of production, but a dissipation

of force. The impetus given to literature in the reign of Queen Victoria will probably ensure the multiplication of books for a long time to come, the spread of popular education will do much to foster the tendency, and the curious mental infirmity which confuses the respective values of the newest and the noblest books, will assist in crowding the shelves of libraries and the stalls at railway stations. We shall continue as a reading public to cherish the illusory idea that merit in literature is a plant of chronological growth, and that as, in feminine quarrels, whosoever has the last word is master of the situation. And it is not the least important of many valuable services to culture that may be rendered by such a society as this, that it may do something to correct that illusion by stimulating a desire for acquaintance, not necessarily with the most recent notions and utterances, but with the best that has been thought and said in the world.

With deathless minds which leave where they have past
A path of light—my soul communion knew;
Till from that glorious intercourse, at last,
As from a mine of magic store, I drew
Words which were weapons; round my heart there grew
The adamantine armour of their power,
And from my fancy wings of golden hue
Sprang forth.

That hoary man had spent his lifelong age
In converse with the dead, who leave the stamp
Of ever burning thoughts on many a page,
When they are gone into the senseless damp
Of graves—*his spirit thus became a lamp*
Of splendour, like to those on which it fed.

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LITERARY CRITICISM AMONG THE TROUBADOURS AND ITS INFLUENCE UPON DANTE.

By H. J. CHAYTOR, M.A.

Professor Saintsbury, in his sketch of mediæval criticism before Dante, observes (*History of Criticism*, vol. i, p. 407), "In the vernacular languages it is hardly necessary to do more than refer to the instructions for accomplishing the intricacies of Provençal verse found in that tongue"; and again (p. 469), "If you judge this [period] by its positive contributions to the history of literary criticism, it has absolutely nothing of consequence to advance but the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*. There is not very much else at all, and what there is consists mainly of agreeable babblings, of schoolbooks, and of incidental utterances, which at best can be taken as a kind of *semeiotic*." A writer who traverses so vast an expanse of country as is covered by Professor Saintsbury's erudition, may well be excused occasional omissions: our purpose here is to show that the Provençal troubadours possessed, and were in the habit of discussing, critical theories of their own, and that these were known to Dante, and influenced his style and his conception of style.

The very problem with which the first book of the *De Vulgari Eloquentia* is concerned, the discovery of the Illustrious Vulgar Tongue, had been already solved by the troubadours in their own practice. Four dialects existed within the area covered by the old Provençal language;

these were not greatly dissimilar, and the ease with which a poem might be transported from one to the other resulted in the formation of a literary language common to the South of France. "We assert," says Dante, at the close of his first book, "that the Illustrious, Cardinal, Courtly and Curial Vulgar Tongue in Italy is that which belongs to all the towns in Italy, but does not appear to belong to any one of them."* Dante thus arrives at the same result to which the troubadours had attained, and by a method which was dissimilar to theirs only in so far as it was rather theoretical than the result of practical operation.

We turn, however, to another fact of greater importance, both for the history of criticism and the development of Dante's theories of style. Troubadour poetry is marked by a steady advance in the direction of complexity in stanza construction, and obscurity of expression; we find two poetical schools in opposition, the *trobar clus* (also known as *car*, *ric*, *oscur*, *sotil*, *cobert*) the obscure, or close, subtle style of composition, and the *trobar clar* (*leu*, *leugier*, *plan*) the clear, light, easy, straightforward style. Two or three causes may have combined to favour the development of obscure writing. The theme of love with which the *chanso* dealt is a subject by no means inexhaustible; there was a continual struggle to revivify the well-worn tale by means of strange turns of expression, by the use of unusual adjectives and forced metaphor, by the discovery of difficult rimes (*rims cars*) and stanza schemes of extraordinary complexity. A further and possibly an earlier cause of obscurity in expression was the fact that the *chanso* was a love song addressed to a married lady; and though in many cases it was the fact that the poem embodied compliments purely conventional, however exag-

* *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, i, 16.

gerated to our ideas, yet the further fact remains that the sentiments expressed might as easily be those of veritable passion, and, in view of a husband's existence, obscurity had a utility of its own. This fact, Guiraut de Bornelh advances as an objection to the use of the easy style: "I should like to send my song to my lady, if I should find a messenger; but if I made another my spokesman, I fear she would blame me. For there is no sense in making another speak out what one wishes to conceal and keep to oneself." The habit of alluding to the lady addressed under a *senhal*, or pseudonym, in the course of the poem, is evidence for a need of privacy, though this custom was also conventionalised, and we find men as well as women alluded to under a *senhal*. It was not always that the *senhal* was an open secret, although in many cases, where a high-born dame desired to boast of the accomplished troubadour in her service, his poems would naturally secure the widest publication which she could procure. A further reason for complexity of composition is given by the troubadour Peire d'Alvernhe: "He is pleasing and agreeable to me who proceeds to sing with words shut up and obscure, to which a man is afraid to do violence." The "violence" apprehended is that of the *joglar*, who might garble a song in the performance of it, if he had not the memory or industry to learn it perfectly, and Peire d'Alvernhe commends compositions so constructed that the disposition of the rimes will prevent the interpolation of topical allusions or careless alteration. The similar safeguard of Dante's *terza rima* will occur to every student.

Troubadour poetry was almost exclusively aristocratic, and the social conditions under which it was produced, apart from the limitations of its subject matter, tended again to foster an obscure and highly artificial diction.

This obscurity was attained, as we have said, by elevation and preciousness of style, and was not the result of confusion of thought. Guiraut de Bornelh tells us his method in a passage worth quoting in the original :—

Mas per miells assire
 mon chan
 vau cercan
 bos motz en fre
 que son tuit cargat e ple
 d'us estrains sens naturals;
 mas non sabon tuich de cals.

But for the better foundation of my song, I keep on the watch for words good on the rein (*i.e.*, tractable, like horses), which are all loaded (like pack horses), and full of a meaning which is unusual, and yet is wholly theirs (*naturals*); but it is not everyone that knows what that meaning is. (*Sim sentis fizels amics*, quoted by Dante, *De V. E.*, i., 9).

Difficulty was thus intentional, *voulu*; in the case of several troubadours, it infected the whole of their writing, no matter what the subject matter. They desired not to be understood of the people. Dean Gaisford's reputed address to his divinity lecture admirably illustrates the attitude of those troubadours who affected the *trobar clus*; "Gentlemen, a knowledge of Greek will enable you to read the oracles of God in the original, and to look down from the heights of scholarship upon the vulgar herd." The inevitable reaction occurred, and a movement in the opposite direction was begun; of this movement the most distinguished supporter was the troubadour, Guiraut de Bornelh. He had been one of the most successful exponents of the *trobar clus*, and afterwards supported the cause of the *trobar clar*. Current arguments for either cause are set forth in the *tenso* between Guiraut de Bornelh and Linhaure (pseudonym for the troubadour Raimbaut d'Aurenga).

1. I should like to know, G. de Bornelh, why, and for what reason, you keep blaming the obscure style. Tell me if you prize so highly that which is common to all? For then would all be equal.

2. Sir Linhaure, I do not take it to heart if each man composes as he pleases: but judge that song is more loved and prized which is made easy and simple, and do not be vexed at my opinion.

3. Guiraut, I do not like my songs to be so confused, that the base and good, the small and great, be appraised alike; my poetry will never be praised by fools, for they have no understanding or care for what is more precious and valuable.

4. Linhaure, if I work late and turn my rest into weariness for that reason (to make my songs simple), does it seem that I am afraid of work? Why compose if you do not want all to understand? Song brings no other advantage.

5. Guiraut, provided that I produce what is best at all times, I care not if it is not so widespread; common-places are no good for the appreciative—that is why gold is more valued than salt, and with song it is even the same.

It is obvious that the disputants are at cross purposes: the object of writing poetry, according to the one, is to please a small circle of highly-trained admirers by the display of technical skill. Guiraut de Bornelh, on the other hand, believes that the poet should have a message for the people, and that even the fools should be able to understand its purport. He adds the further statement that composition in the easy style demands no less skill and power than is required for the production of obscurity. This latter is a point upon which he repeatedly insists: "The troubadour who makes his meaning clear is just as clever as he who cunningly conjoins words." "My opinion is that it is not in obscure but in clear composition that toil is involved" Later troubadours of renown supported his arguments; Raimon de Miraval (1168–1180) declares: "Never should obscure poetry be praised, for it is composed only for a price, compared with sweet festal songs, easy to learn, such as I sing." So,

too, pronounces the Italian, Lanfranc Cigala (1241–1257) : “I could easily compose an obscure, subtle poem if I wished ; but no poem should be so concealed beneath subtlety as not to be clear as day. For knowledge is of small value if clearness does not bring light ; obscurity has ever been regarded as death, and brightness as life.” The fact is thus sufficiently demonstrated that these two styles existed in opposition, and that any one troubadour might practice both. Troubadour poetry was never a national poetry ; it depended for its existence upon the feudal organization of society, and the fact that it appealed to an exclusive aristocracy tended to foster its artificial tendencies.

During the flourishing period of troubadour poetry, the exponents of this art had continually made their way into the north of Italy and the north of Spain. The devastation produced in the south of France by the Albigeois crusades drove the troubadours to make these countries a permanent home. Their poetry depended for its existence upon the continuance of that feudal organization of society which had made its development possible, and they naturally gravitated to the courts of foreign patrons. At the court of Frederic II, in Sicily, servile imitation and exaggeration of troubadour style resulted in the formation of the “*Sicilian School*,” as Dante has named these *provenzaleggianti* ; with them are to be included the Tuscan poets of the period (1225–1260), among whom the best known was Guittone d’Arezzo. Artificiality here reigned supreme, and a few lines of quotation will explain Guittone’s poetical ideals better than pages of criticism :—

Ai chera	donna di valore al sommo,
perché fera	m’è sì, lasso, vostra alma ?
più chera	assai vostro fedele sommo
si nom fera	ne fo cosa alcuna alma.

che chera	vostro presgio orato sommo
non mi fera	più mai lingua che calma
con ch' era	vostra grandez' a sommo
si, ca fera	aportare si grande salma.

In Tuscany, the revolution in poetical ideals was brought about by the revival of learning, and a return to philosophical studies. Guido Guinicelli himself, the founder of the "*dolce stil nuovo*" at first imitated and eulogised Guittone d'Arezzo and his Provençal models, until his philosophical training brought greater depth and simplicity to his thought, and a corresponding vigour and directness to his expression. Provençal poetry was fast becoming a "classical" literature.

Of this new attitude towards Provençal literature, Dante is the best of all examples. In the *Convito* (i, 11) he fulminates against those who "fanno vile lo parlare italico e prezioso quello di Provenza." But he was well aware of the measure of his debt to the troubadours, and his admiration for their literature is especially concentrated upon the person of Arnaut Daniel. The ideal of literary excellence implied in this judgment is somewhat disconcerting to a modern critic. Arnaut Daniel is a troubadour of the highest technical skill, and of the greatest difficulty and obscurity. Infinitely preferable as pure poetry are the compositions of men like Bernart de Ventadorn, who may be described in certain respects as the troubadour Wordsworth: yet of him Dante nowhere makes the barest mention. Macaulay, in his *Essay on Dante*, observes the same point: "It is impossible not to remark Dante's admiration of writers far inferior to himself, and in particular, his idolatry of Virgil, who, elegant and splendid as he is, has no pretensions to the depth and originality of mind which characterise his Tuscan worshipper. In truth, it may be laid down as an almost

universal rule, that good poets are bad critics." Granting the truth of this dictum, we receive none the less a shock of painful surprise when we find the author of the *Divina Commedia* quoting Cicero, Livy, Pliny, Frontinus and Orosius, without a breath of discrimination, as writers "qui usi sunt altissimas prosas."*

We may grant the badness of Dante's criticism. In view of the utterly detestable taste in literature which had distinguished the preceding generation, we can find excuse for him. At the same time, he had definite ideas as to what style should be, and it is our present business to try and discover what these ideas were. It is, in the first place, tempting to believe that Dante was aware of the opposition between the poets of the *trobar clus* and the *trobar clar*, and had followed the controversy. It is more than a coincidence that, in the *Purgatorio* (xxvi, 115 ff.), he should compare the troubadour who was most representative of the obscure school with the troubadour who had fought against that style of composition.

'O frate' dissi, 'questi ch'io ti scerno
 Col dito' ed additò un spirto innanzi,
 'Fu miglior fabbro del parlar materno.
 Versi d'amore e prose di romanzi
 Soperchiò tutti, e lascia dir gli stolti
 Che quel di Lemosi credon ch'avanzì.
 A voce più ch'al ver drizzan li volti,
 E così ferman sua opinione
 Prima ch'arte o ragion per lor s'ascolti.
 Così fer molti antichi di Guittone,
 Di grido in grido pur lui dando pregio,
 Fin che l'ha vinto il ver con più persone.'

The dispute as to the meaning of *prose di romanzi* need not trouble us here: Arnaut Daniel is preferred to Guiraut de Bornelh upon grounds of style, in the face of

* *De Vulg. El.*, ii, 6.

the greater reputation which Guiraut had acquired by his simpler style of writing. On similar grounds the condemnation of Guittone d'Arezzo is explained; * he has "never got out of the habit of being plebeian in words and construction."

Whatever is meant by the term "style" at the present day, it will be generally agreed that the style of a great writer is the expression of his character; he may, within limits, change his style with a change of subject matter, but his use of words, his habits of expression, will betray his personality at all times. "Le style est l'homme même." This is true of Dante, if of anyone, yet his own theory of style was strangely different. He conceives style as dictated by the subject matter, and as ennobling or degrading the subject matter: he excuses the difficulty of the *Convito* from this point of view; "convienmi che con più alto stilo dia nella presente opera un poco di gravezza, per la quale paia di maggiore autorità; e questa scusa basti alla fortezza (difficulty) del mio Comento" (i, 4). He is no lover of stylistic affectation for its own sake; he will show the beauty of the Italian vernacular in prose, as no one will then be able to detract from it, as might be done in a poetical work, by saying that the beauty is derived from poetical adornment.† Style, in short, is something external to man—a garment—to use Dante's own metaphor, which can be placed upon subject matter. Hence the difference between Dante's point of view and ours. For us, style is one, as character is one; any writer, in Dante's opinion, may have two or three styles at command, and his choice between them must depend upon the nature of the subject which he expounds. For us, style is essentially elusive, and defies complete analysis; to copy an author's style is usually to produce

* *De Vulg. El.*, ii, 6. . . † *Conv.*, i, 10.

parody; but to Dante, style can be fully analysed; "we are said to make use of the tragic style when the stateliness of the lines, as well as the loftiness of the construction, and the excellence of the words, agree with the weight of the subject,"* and he then proceeds to give directions for the choice of words and constructions.

Any attempt, therefore, to explain Dante's admiration for Arnaut Daniel and "il chiuso parlare," or to explain the labour expended upon the sestina or trilingual canzone, must begin with the consideration of Dante's views upon style in general as something external to a writer, which he can take up or lay down at will. It must, then, be remembered that the troubadours had left behind them a tradition to the effect that the elevated and difficult style was the aristocratic. The idea still persists among the uneducated that the use of high-sounding phrases and involved sentence construction presupposes an unusual degree of mental power. It was an idea, by no means obvious to mediæval writers, that the highest degree of mental power is in reality exhibited in the clear and simple exposition of a difficult and abtruse subject. Dante had not entirely grasped this fact, and, as he explains, he regards Arnaut Daniel as a poet of supreme excellence, because he had treated of the highest possible subject—love—in the most elevated of all possible styles. There is, however, this wide difference between Dante's use of the elevated style and the *trobar clus*; the troubadours used the obscure style to impress or to delight their audience; Dante uses it to "ennoble" his subject, that is, to secure for it a greater measure of authority and dignity.

We have mentioned Macaulay's dictum: that good poets are generally bad critics. Dante cannot be regarded as an exception to the rule. We find Cicero presenting

* *De Vulg. El.*, ii, 4.

such perfect specimens of prose writing as the *De Senectute* with hesitation and diffidence to Cæsar for perusal, and yet complacently publishing the deplorable doggerel upon his consulship. Dante's admiration for Peire d'Alvernhe, Arnaut Daniel, and troubadour obscurity is but another manifestation of the same defect. But genius will triumph over all obstacles, even over those of its own upraising.

Bibliographical note.—Most of the passages which embody the troubadour idea of literary criticism are collected in the thesis, *Quæ judicia de litteris fecerint Provinciales*, P. Andraud, Paris, 1902. The *tenso* between G. de Bornelh and Linhaure may be read in *Guiraut von Bornelh*, A. Kolsen, Berlin, 1894 (*Berliner Beiträge zur romanischen Philologie*, No. vi). For Provençal influence upon early Italian poetry, see A. Gaspari, *Die Sizilianische Dichterschule*; and the same author's *Italian Literature to the Death of Dante*, ed. H. Eilsner, London, 1901; also A. Bartoli, *Storia della letteratura italiana*, Firenze, 1878-89. A representative selection of extracts from Guittone d'Arezzo may be found in Monaci's *Crestomazia Italiana*, Città di Castello, 1889, vol. i, p. 168.

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THE ETHICAL DOCTRINE OF ARISTOTLE.

By JOHN MACCUNN, M.A.

EXPOSITION of the chief end of man is apt to labour under a disadvantage. It has to overcome the notion, deeply rooted in the popular mind, and even in some ethical systems, that the end is something distant in the future. This is a notion—shall we say a fallacy?—that assumes various forms. For the end thus supposed to beckon us from afar may be variously conceived. It may be (as popularly it often is) a state of realised material prosperity; or a state of pleasurable feeling; a state of inward virtue that makes its possessor independent of any environment, or a state in which the perfect man has settled down into equilibrium with the perfect society. But whatever it be, the result is the same. In proportion as the end is thus projected into the future and its fruition postponed, so do the actions of the here and now of daily experience sink to the level of mere means to ends. Should the ends be realised, good and well; our labour is not in vain. But should the end, the distant end, prove, as by reason of one or other of the many possible mischances that flesh is heir to it may prove, illusory, do not our actions drop at once into the dreary category of misspent time and service vain? Do we not all know instances of men, lured on by phantoms of wealth, power, happiness, who have lost their lives in drudgery for the sake of far-off ends they never realised?

It is one merit of Aristotle's idea of the end of life that it escapes this danger. There is a passage in the Xth Book of *The Ethics* where he discovers an analogy—not com-

monly realised—between the life of frivolous amusement and the life of virtuous activity.* For however wide asunder, wide as the poles, these two things be, there is yet one point in which they meet. In different ways their votaries alike refuse to sacrifice the actions of the passing hour by turning them into the mere means to a distant and it may be precarious end. In different ways they both bear witness to their sense of the value of life as it goes on here and now. With the one it is the intrinsic worth of strenuous action; with the other it is the heedless absorption in amusement. With both, there is pronounced divergence from that type of utilitarian who “never is, but always to be blest,” because all present toil and struggle are but the price for something that (so he hopes) is to come. *Carpe diem* is doubtless best known as the motto of the voluptuary. But it might also be appropriated by him who knows the inestimable worth that may lie in the daily round and common task.

This exactly illustrates Aristotle’s view of the moral end. No one can hold more firmly that there is an end of life. No one can hold more firmly that our daily actions have inherent worth.† And he holds both things, because he unites them in the conviction, fundamental to his ethical doctrine, that the end of life is so far from being remote from the here and now of daily action that it may be already present, in actual fruition, in the life of every man whose actions lie in the difficult yet never—save in exceptional cases of degradation—inaccessible path of virtue.‡

Not, indeed, present in finality; finality there is none in the changing scene of moral activity. Yet still present in that essential worth which always appertains to action that is instinct with the spirit of virtue.

* X, vi, 3. † *E. g.* VI, v., 4. ‡ I, ix, 4.

This comes out unmistakably in some remarks upon a well-worn aphorism which seems to have bulked largely in the Greek mind. "Count no man happy till his death," Solon had said, in words that have always come home to moralisers over man's vicissitudes — those vicissitudes which may wreck even a Lydian prosperity.* Aristotle joins direct issue. Why (so we may paraphrase his comment), Why thus, with Solon, withhold our verdict upon a man's life till we can write it only as epitaph or elegy? For if only our conception of human happiness be sound, if only we identify it, not with the comforts or the sumptuosities which may come and go at fortune's caprice, but with right living, strenuous moral activity, genuine fulfilment of function, then let us never suppose that when any man is happy in this sense, he has missed or ever can miss the end of life. In so far as a man acts nobly, a true life is his already. So far he *has* his end. And though dark days may come what of that? Can dark days quench the life? Can they rob a man of the inalienable power of doing noble deeds once he really has it? Or can they rob him of that life of thought which is, in Aristotle's estimate, higher even than noble deeds? Nay, on the principle that "adversity doth best discover virtue" may not the very reverses of fortune furnish moral opportunities such as are denied to the prosperous. True nobility does but shine through the more brightly. Or in those other strong brief words, "It is what a man does that is the supreme thing in life."†

Let us, then, look straight at life as we find it. Let us recognise the value of every crowded hour of glorious life as it goes. Let us never fancy that its worth is staked upon eventualities. On the contrary, let us declare, unhesitatingly, that that man has already, *ipso facto*,

* Cf. I, x, 7 *et seq.* † I, x, 13.

entered upon the fruition of the end of his being who is here and now giving expression, giving actuality to what is in him, in thought, word and deed.

This view turned upon the Aristotelian conception of the end as in its essence activity or function.* It was so Aristotle read experience. Looking out, with that comprehensive outlook which characterised him, upon life and nature, the fact he saw everywhere was change, process, activity. It was so, *e.g.*, in the arts. What does craftsman or artist exist for if it be not to *do* something? It is so again in the organic world. Do we not see there the spectacle of organs fulfilling this function, whether these be the several organs or the organisms of which they are constituent. So is it when we pass from the physiological to the psychical. The soul of man would not be the soul if it did not exist in order to energize. Never can the human soul rest from its labours, because it is its very nature not to rest but to realise its potentialities in and through its own activities.

But then it is above all things necessary that it should be active *in the right way*. For whilst the soul that is incapable of action is irretrievably atrophied, the soul that is left to act by light of nature is on the certain road to moral catastrophe.† Nor was it ever the prime difficulty, either with Plato or Aristotle, to bring mankind to act. It was not inertia or apathy they dreaded. It was that mankind were only too ready to act, to act energetically *in the wrong way*.

This is a point upon which Aristotle leaves us in no doubt. "It is a hard task to be good,"‡ he says. And the reason is neither human apathy nor depravity. It is found in the simple fact that, as life is, there are so many possible ways of going wrong. This is inevitable. For it

* I, vii, 10, 11, *et seq.* † VI, xiii, 1. ‡ II, ix, 2 and 7.

comes of the fundamental fact, not to be evaded except by flight to the desert or the cloister, that all human action is immersed in circumstances, and by consequence that every important decision of our lives has to be made face to face with conditions, many, diverse, complex, changing, incalculable. Thus, *e.g.*, to follow Aristotle's own illustration, it is difficult to be generous because it is so easy to give. Yes; but so difficult to give aright.*

This one may give to lavishness and spoil all by graceless ostentation. That one may give with the heart of a philanthropist—to the cause of folly or fanaticism. Still a third may in all his giving be admirable—except that he never seems able to give enough. And so on with all the other duties of life. The steps of man are beset by pitfalls. He has unrivalled opportunities for backsliding. In this he is without a peer. Infinite, as the Pythagoreans declared, are his ways of error.† Small wonder. Driven on by a troop of desires, every one of which (having no moderating law within itself) may betray him into excess; confronted, in every act, by a multiplicity of conditions, many of them to the last degree variable, yet all requiring to be reckoned with, is it cause for surprise that the fallible human animal, left to the freedom of his own will, should not merely (as the catechism has it) fall from his high estate, but never so much as rise to it; and, indeed, go on stumbling and blundering till he finally stumbles into his grave in this unending task of adapting the desires, feelings, and purposes within to the complex and changing circumstances without?

Yet nothing less will suffice. Life must be lived. Men must act.‡ Decisions must be faced. And, thus beset by possible pitfalls, each man must do his best to find the way of virtue—that difficult way which, in each case, lies

* II, ix, 2. † II, vi, 14. ‡ I, viii, 10 and *passim*.

like a single narrow precarious path amidst many possibilities of disastrous deviation. Who will say that it is a way easy to find? Do not most men know well what it is to miss it?

From right to left eternal swerving

They zig-zag on

Yet everyone must learn to tread it, if he is to be equal to the difficulties of the moral life.

Now this is the substance of what Aristotle has to say in that classical Second Book in which he sets himself to sketch the line, or course, or mode, which a man's activities must take if they are justifiably to be identified with the activity which, as we have seen, he regarded as the end of life. He was entirely convinced that, just as surely as there is a right way of going to work in the practice of any art—that way, *e.g.*, which a skilled musician would follow in playing the harp—so is there a right way of going to work in that greater and nobler art—the art of living.* Moral action, too, has its characteristic modes of excellence, and they are no less real and definite than the characteristic excellencies which in their own departments mark the good doctor, or seaman, or musician.

And his way of expressing this is contained in the well-known statement that all human virtue (or excellence), just like all art, “aims at the mean.”

Now it is above all things necessary to understand what this celebrated doctrine of “the mean” is *not*. It is not a worldly counsel of moderation. Still less is it a doctrine that involves the monstrous absurdity that a man must not be virtuous over much, lest by excess of virtue he may land himself in vice! Like every sane moralist, Aristotle believed—as in effect he says—that the more

*I, vii, 14.

virtue a man can attain to, the better a man he is.* Nor, again, does this doctrine aim simply at telling us that every virtue can be represented as lying between excess and defect, as *e.g.*, courage can be located between passionate foolhardiness and pusillanimous cowardice. He has a deeper meaning to convey than this. What he sees is that, in every act of our lives, be it in the hour of danger or the hour of temptation, be it in the spending of our money or the conduct of our public life or the intercourse of business and friendship, we must assert that mastery over our feelings and desires which will alone enable us to do what is right *in the concrete situations in which we may be called upon to act*.

There is a well-known passage in the second book in which Aristotle says that virtue is more "exact" (*ἀκριβεστέρα*) than any art.† It sounds at first surprising. What, we might well ask, can be more "exact" than skilled craftsmanship? Does it not work up to definite plan? Does it not execute with all but faultless precision? Does it not astound us by the amazing deftness with which it handles, and humours, and masters its material? And is it of *virtue*—virtue which, even in the best, has its false steps, its conscious imperfections, its proverbially unsatisfactory achievements, its doleful record of miserable failures—is it of *this* we can honestly say that it is more "exact"?

Yet the dictum is justified. To "hit the mean" in art or handicraft may be hard enough. It is not done without apprenticeship. But to hit the mean in conduct is harder. For when we pass from the ordinary arts to the art of life, we pass from problems that are comparatively simple to problems that are indefinitely more complex; from conditions which are comparatively few and recurrent, to

* II, vi, 17.

† II, vi, 9; *cf.* the whole context.

conditions that are many and variable—conditions of time and place, of ends and means, of circumstances and persons. And, then, in this master-art of life, there is one matter of supreme moment with which the arts strictly so-called have nothing to do. In *them* it is enough that the craftsman knows his work, and turns out his product. It matters nothing to us in what spirit his work may be done. It is the skill of the artificer that concerns us, not the character of the man. Far otherwise when we turn to Virtue.* Virtue is not virtue—it is the mere shell and semblance of virtue—if it be not the expression of the moral spirit of the man, if it do not carry in it that settled, intelligent, deliberate and disinterested purpose which is of the essence of morality. And so it comes that, in moral action, as contradistinguished from craftsmanlike production, every one of us has to reckon not only with the external conditions of his deeds, but with that inward world of feeling, desire, and purpose which, under these external conditions, has to be expressed and actualised. This being so, who so blind as to fail to see that a truly virtuous deed demands a careful circumspection, and a nicety of adaptation, which go far beyond anything that can be expected even of the most skilled of craftsmen? To hit the mean—how can it be other than hard when the possibilities of missing it, in one way or another, are so many? To be a good man, not in reputation or potentiality, but in the hour of actual concrete endeavour and choice, how can this be other than arduous, when it means the preservation of that difficult precarious narrow way of rectitude which is beset, within as well as without, by so many stones of stumbling and rocks of offence? †

Such are the difficulties of the moral life as they are

* II, iv, 3. † II, vi, 14.

set forth more especially in that great Second book of *The Ethics*. They do not lie where certain other moralists find them. Not in that depravity of the human heart and will which is the note of asceticism. Not in that sheer ignorance which has so often been regarded as the source of all evil, from Socrates to Bentham or Mill. Rather in those concrete acts of choice which must for ever remain the inevitable daily difficulties of every man who sets himself to do his work in the world.

How, then, are these difficulties to be met? To this question an adequate answer would, of course, involve little short of an exposition of *The Ethics*. Yet it is quite possible to go at once to the root of the matter. For it is the very core of Aristotelian doctrine that the man who can alone grapple victoriously with these difficulties of the moral life must bring to his tasks that master-virtue that is in translation variously rendered as practical wisdom, prudence, or sound moral judgment (*φρόνησις*).*

Aristotle is, in fact, the greatest of all the prophets of ancient or modern times of practical wisdom. His position here is akin to that which has been made familiar to Englishmen—at anyrate in the domain of politics—by the writings of Burke. All that Burke says about the paramountcy of “prudence,” the statesman’s virtue, is but an echo, and, indeed, an acknowledged echo of what Aristotle says about *φρόνησις*. Both writers are convinced that the concrete difficulties of action are not to be solved by theories. Burke says so when he declares that “no lines are to be laid down for political wisdom,” and in a hundred passages enjoins regard to the “circumstances” of the hour. And Aristotle says so, even more emphatically (if that be possible),

* Cf. VI, xiii, 6, and X, viii, 3.

when dwelling, as is his wont, on the variable and incalculable character of moral fact, he declares that we must abandon all expectation of theoretically working out moral principles (themselves only rough generalisations) into detail, and be content to leave concrete issues to the decisions of those confronted by them.* It is needless to multiply citations. The point follows from the inherent nature of moral fact. Moral fact, as Aristotle regards it, is something widely different from the fixed and comparatively simplified objects with which the abstract sciences are concerned. It is complex. It is subject to variation so great that, in the last resort, it defies strict scientific formulation altogether. It is even declared, in one startling context, to "have nothing invariable about it."† The result follows. Any attempt to deduce the concrete duties of life, *more geometrico*, from abstract moral principles is futile. The subtlety and flux of human affairs forbid it. No ethical system, be it never so closely reasoned, can tell a man what in the concrete he ought to do. Nor can all the volumes and learned doctors of casuistry, be their imaginations never so fertile, either foresee the precise actual form in which our difficulties will present themselves, or prescribe to us how we are to meet them. When the hour strikes, the final appeal must lie, not to casuistical or to any other system, but to what Burke calls "prudence," and Aristotle *φρόνησις*. For, even as it is by professional insight, such as theory alone can never produce, that a good doctor prescribes aright for the patient; even as it is by the artistic skill which is above formulas that the true craftsman makes the utmost of the materials at his disposal, so is it by the practical wisdom, which is not only a virtue, but the root of all

* II, ii, 3 and 4.

† II, ii, 3, and *cf.* I, iii, 1-4, and VI, v, 3.

virtues,* that mankind "hit the mean" in the manifold problems of the actual moral life.† Without this the cleverest, or the most learned, or the most reasoning of men stands foredoomed to blundering and failure. With it, there is no problem, from the administration of the State to the petty concerns of private life, which a man need fear to face.‡

Our next point follows. Clearly, if Aristotle speaks truth, we must, with all our getting, get practical wisdom.

Now it is not to be denied that upon this point Aristotle is tantalising. Considering the place which *φρόνησις* holds in his scheme of life, being indeed none other than the supreme practical virtue, few readers can fail to wish that what he has to say about it (though he says much about it) had included a more direct account of the manner of its growth, nurture, and development. The more so because *The Ethics*—as his own words so often remind us—is much more fitly described as a treatise on the art than on the science of morals.

Nevertheless, there are certain points which emerge with utmost clearness. And one of these—vital in all ethical theory—is that we need never expect to find practical wisdom apart from goodness of character. This is repeated by Aristotle again and again.§ It is central in his doctrine. No man—so he insists with the reiteration of conviction—can rightly grasp the principles of action, no man can come to a sound decision upon a concrete moral issue, unless he be a good man.

Mere cleverness will not suffice here. For though cleverness can see an intellectual difficulty, and be won-

* VI, xiii, 6. "The presence of the single virtue of *φρόνησις* implies the presence of all the moral virtues."

† II, vi, 15.

‡ Cf. VI, viii.

§ VI, xii, 10; X, viii, 3.

derfully astute in discerning means to ends, it is not to the cleverest man of our acquaintance that we should betake ourselves in the hour of our moral perplexities. The cleverest of scoundrels is after all a fool in *moral* insight. No; the only counsellor worth having is the man in whom a good character has kept the judgment sane and true. Few things in life are more striking, and, indeed, more satisfactory than the impotence of evil livers to form really sound judgments of men and affairs. Nor are many things more certain than that, upon a moral issue at anyrate, the children of this world are *not* wiser in their generation than the children of light. Not that cleverness is to be undervalued, and, indeed, it would be a sorry compliment to honest men and true to suggest that their trials and perplexities are not sufficient to call forth all their powers, intelligence included. The true conclusion is Aristotle's—*that cleverness and character must strike alliance*.*

Now it is one of Aristotle's greatest services to ethical thought that he has pointed out not only that this is so, but why it must be so.

This comes out in a passage in that pregnant Sixth Book where he remarks, with terse significance, that "Vice is destructive of principle"; and hastens to explain that he does not mean that it is destructive of all principle.† It is not (to take his own illustration) destructive of mathematical principles, which being abstract and scientific depend as little upon moral virtue as moral virtue depends upon them. Indubitably. It could hardly increase our confidence in a mathematician to be assured that he was virtuous. Mathematicians, let us hope, are all virtuous. But who will dare to say that it is their virtues that make them mathematicians? With *moral* principles,

* VI, xii, 10. † VI, v, 6.

however, it is otherwise. Tell me that a man is vicious, and at a stroke all confidence in his moral judgment is shattered. For moral principles are not, like scientific principles, abstract, and removed from "the colouring of the affections." Far from it. They embody the concrete conditions of life and action, the concrete ends for which men struggle and strive.* And this being so, it follows that the nature of a man's likings and dislikings, his attractions and repulsions (be they natural or be they acquired) must profoundly modify the practical judgments of his whole life. Thus, let one or other of us have a constitutional craving for pleasure, or shrinking from pain: do we not know that these exaggerated susceptibilities will vitally, and only too often disastrously, influence our practical valuations in every decision of our lives? The reason is manifest. In a moral judgment it is never enough that a man should simply *know* the facts, as he might, *e.g.*, know the data when he is constrained to judge that the angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles. No; he must also *weigh* the facts. He must value them in their relative importance or unimportance. And when it comes to the matter of weighing and valuing, how easy it is for these secret proclivities for pleasure, these secret recoils from pain, to reflect themselves in his estimates! As with pleasures and pains, so with all the varied conditions which we gather up in our purposes and projects. We do not contemplate them in that dry light of the abstract understanding in which we regard the facts we formulate in scientific principles. Far otherwise. We regard them in the light of the valuations we have come to put upon them in the course of our personal experience. What nature has made us, or what our educators have

* VI, v, 6. "The principles of practice are the ends for which the actions are done."

made us, or what we have made ourselves, will here inevitably determine what we think. The saint will have one scale of valuation; the sinner another. And similarly along the whole graduated series—the mass of the human race—who lie between the saint and the sinner. What their experience has made salient in their characters, that will be salient in their practical judgments; and what their experience has made secondary, trifling or indifferent, will likewise be so in their apprehension of moral principles. Such at anyrate is the teaching of Aristotle. We have called him the prophet of practical wisdom. So he is. Without practical wisdom, as we have said, the difficulties of the moral life are insoluble. This is certain. And it is equally certain that this supreme quality, this “eye of the soul,” this root of all virtue, will never come to its maturity *except in organic union with moral character*.*

It follows at once that practical wisdom demands a long apprenticeship. Wishing for it will not give it us; nor will any mere effort of will however intense. Nor can the quickest wits command its presence. For the preparation for it must be begun when as yet it was little needed—far back in the early days of youth, when parents and teachers were building up the moral character. Let no man think, when he has met some crisis of later years with prudence and sagacity, that all the credit is his own. Let him think rather with gratitude of the friends of his youth who laid the foundations of all sanity of judgment by guiding his feet in the ways of virtue.

Now it is matter of common knowledge that the agency to which Aristotle assigns by far the greatest influence in this making of the character is habituation. All the world knows that he said that virtue was “habit.”

* VI, xii, 10.

This unmistakable emphasis upon habituation is due to the fact that Aristotle found himself unable to apply to the moral life that conception of development which pervades his philosophy of nature. It is the mark of a *natural* product that it unfolds its being from within. But this does not hold of a moral character. We cannot say of *it*, as we can of a natural product, that it is, from the first, potentially all that it becomes.* Man, in short, is not naturally virtuous. For though, in one passage at any rate, Aristotle cites the doctrine that men are supposed to have all virtues "from their very birth," he hastens to add that this is but a loose statement.† On strict analysis man is by nature neither virtuous nor depraved. He is morally indeterminate. He may come to honour, or to shame: but it is not by natural necessity that he does either.

In this fact we find the grounds of the plea for "habit." For it is precisely the shortcoming of nature that is the educator's opportunity. Here, as elsewhere, art must remedy the imperfections of nature; and, in presence of this capacity for opposite developments (*δύναμις τῶν ἐναντιῶν*) step in and create that settled bias towards virtue which the natural man so conspicuously lacks. There is no other way. He who would win the harper's skill must win it by harping; he who would write, by writing; he who would heal the sick, by healing them. In these, as indeed in all the arts, *faculty is begotten of function*, and definite proclivity comes of determinate acts. So in life. Soul, like body, grows to the modes in which it is exercised. And this being so, the one thing needful is that, by all the resources of the State and family, the young should be brought to perform the appropriate acts that make the corresponding habits.‡

* Cf. VI, iv, 4, and II, i, 2-4. † VI. xiii, 1, *et seq.* ‡ II, i. X, ix, 6, *et seq.*

We need not at present enquire how this is done, or how far Aristotle sides with those who allure or those who drive the young into the ways of virtue, however interesting these questions may be. It more concerns us to take note of the result, and to make ourselves clear as to *the kind of habit Aristotle identifies with virtue*.

It is *not* (and few misinterpretations could be worse) the kind of "habit" that implies automatism. So many strong words have been flung at habit, so understood, by the apostles of the free life of the spirit like Rousseau or Wordsworth, that it relieves us of much controversial embroilment to say at once that it is not for "habit" as so understood that Aristotle stands sponsor. How could he? We have seen already that change of circumstances—change from man to man, from place to place, from time to time—is precisely what creates the difficulties of life. It was so Aristotle saw life. Life is nothing if not a scene of change. Yet who does not know that it is change of circumstances—an altered situation, an unlooked for difficulty, an unexpected emergency—that puts the man of ruts and grooves to confusion. If, then, virtue be indeed a "habit," we may be sure that Aristotle would be the very last to regard it as a habit of such a kind as to stamp its luckless possessor with an inability to deal with his problems. It is true, no doubt, that the "habit" (ἔξις) we read of in the Second book of *The Ethics* does involve in it a settled tendency to act in determinate ways. If it did not it would not be a habit; and indeed it is precisely in this respect (as already said) that habit differs from the indeterminateness of natural desire. So far, the man of virtue *is*, in a sense, the man of grooves. He has a settled tendency to be brave, or generous, or temperate, and so on. But, then, Aristotelian "habit" has another and no less essential aspect. It is, as runs its definition,

“a habit *with the capacity of deliberate choice.*” In other words, while it involves, on the one hand, the habitual tendency to strive in certain specific directions (which correspond to the various moral virtues), it no less involves the presence of that intelligence which can alone enable its possessor to adapt his behaviour circumspectly to the changing situations which succeed one another in all ordinary experience. Now these two things—habit and intelligent self-adjustment to circumstances—are so often held to be opposites, that it is the more important to understand that every full-formed virtue—as Aristotle conceives—unites them both.

Thus, when a man is brave, he will come to meet the hour of danger not only with a settled tendency to face possible suffering or death as a brave man ought, but also with an entirely circumspect and deliberate consideration of the details of the concrete cases in which his courage is put to the proof. So with generosity with money. There is nothing to prevent a man from being generous *by habit*, *i.e.*, from having a settled tendency towards right giving; and at the same time exercising acute discrimination as to the persons to whom he gives, or the amounts he gives them, or the times and seasons of his giving. In earlier years, of course, when the young are under the watchful tutelage of parent or public authority, they will do, in the main, just what they are bidden, though even then there is always *some* room for incipient choice. Indeed, Aristotle remarks (in *The Politics*) that deliberation begins in boyhood! But as the years go on, as the outlook on life becomes wider, as every man's tasks and problems become peculiarly his own, the deeply-rooted second nature which makes its possessor persistently brave or generous will be increasingly reinforced by deliberate choice in the details of behaviour—choice which is so far

from being blind or automatic that it implies a high development of the moral intelligence.* So far is the Aristotelian doctrine of habit from forgetfulness of the fact—written large on the face of Greek ethics—that man morally as well as speculatively is a rational being.

Bearing this in mind, we are now in a position to draw together two aspects of Aristotle's teaching which at first sight might seem to fall asunder—the emphasis on habit and the primacy of practical wisdom. For so far are these from being incompatible that it is just because virtue is a habit—a habit *of the kind we have seen*—that practical wisdom can ever come to its maturity. It happens that the doctrine of habit and the doctrine of practical wisdom lie far apart in the arrangement of Aristotle's treatise. They do not, however, lie apart in significance. For, in truth, they are organically related.

For it is time now to recall the fact that the deliverances of practical wisdom are judgments *that reflect our valuations*. We saw this when we recognised how profoundly they are prone to be coloured by our predispositions to pleasures or our repulsions from pains. We have now to see that they are influenced no less by those settled dispositions, those deeply cut proclivities we call habits. A true soldier, *e.g.*, knows the meaning of wounds and death. He knows it well. But when he has, in actual campaigning, been habituated in that stern school to keep his face to the front, he will not, like the coward, suffer the prospect even of death to outweigh in his choice his habitual duty to his country. A generous giver knows the value of money; but in his estimates the niggardliness that makes money bulk large, and benevolence small, will find no place. It is so through-

* Cf. III, ii, 17. III, 3. VI, ii, 2 and 4.

out the entire circle of the virtues. For good habits do not merely prompt us steadily to do good actions. Their influence goes deeper. It affects our moral judgments. Habitual courage, self-control, generosity, munificence, public spirit, justice, friendship, all of them imply those deeply-rooted likings and dislikings, attractions and repulsions, which inevitably influence all the concrete decisions of daily life. The first step towards making the moral judgment sound is to take care that the moral habits are good.

And then (as we have seen), the life of habit never with Aristotle becomes the death in life of automatism. Contrariwise. For though, as the years go on, habituation does not cease to cut ever deeper, and, indeed, indelible tracks in the soul, there is likewise all the while emerging, in ever fuller measure, that reason which is more truly man's distinctive characteristic than even the best of his habits.* From the first (as we have seen) the kind of habit that the father wishes to create in the son, or the statesman in the citizen, is a habit that goes with ability to choose, and as, with advancing life, cares, perplexities, trials, problems inevitably multiply, so is this faculty of choice called into fuller and ever fuller exercise, till eventually it issues in the practical wisdom of the developed type in whom intelligence has struck alliance with character, and in whom the stability of long-established habits has joined hands with the judgment, sagacity, shrewdness, considerateness, insight, deliberateness which mark the maturity of the practical reason.† So entirely is the doctrine of habit in harmony with the doctrine of practical wisdom.

* IX, iv, 3 and 4. X, vii, 9.

† I assume that *φρόνησις* as the excellence of the practical reason includes all these.

It remains to see, somewhat more closely, what precisely this practical reason does.

Be it clearly understood, therefore, at the outset, that the practical reason of man is meant to be practical. It is what its name implies, and its function is not to construct a science of Ethics (for this, indeed, in the strict sense of the word, is regarded as impossible), not, in short, to theorise about morality, but to enable mankind, collectively and individually, to become moral.

It may seem something of a paradox that a thinker who, perhaps beyond all others, magnified the human reason, or, indeed, that a lecturer who gave the world the immortal *Ethics*, should declare that a science of morals is not so much as possible. But so it is. Nor, if reiteration can convince, does he leave the readers of *The Ethics* in any doubt that that masterpiece was meant primarily not to tell the world what goodness is, but to enable mankind to attain some nearer actual approximation to it.*

Now we have already seen, in a general way, what it is that practical wisdom can do for its possessor. It enables him to decide, alike in large affairs or small, what under given circumstances ought here and now to be done. Such decisions, however (as we have seen), are not easy. They are, on the contrary, such as to call forth all the powers of deliberation and choice. Now on Deliberation Aristotle's teaching is alike clear and significant. Thus he leaves us in no doubt as to where Deliberation ends. Men, he remarks, cannot go on deliberating for ever. They must act, and, therefore, as soon as in their deliberations they light upon some action here and now within their own control, they decide to do it. This is choice, and in choice deliberation ends. Where then does it begin? What do we deliberate about?

* *E.g.*, cf. I, iii, 6. II, ii, 1. X, ix, 1.

Aristotle's answer to this question is contained in a sentence which at first may startle. "Men," he says, "do not deliberate about *ends*, but about means to ends."* And not a little of Aristotle's doctrine is involved in the remark. For why is it that we are said not to deliberate about ends? And the question would probably be pressed home by those questioning spirits who are prepared to say that there is nothing, no duty whatever, which private judgment may not make matter of debate.

But Aristotle has his answer. We deliberate in order that we may choose, and it is a fundamental Aristotelian doctrine that a man does not choose his ends. He does not choose his ends; because he finds them. Shall I quit myself as a man in the field? Shall I withstand the temptations of the flesh? Shall I administer my affairs with discretion? Shall I serve my country in civil life? Shall I be true to my friends? These are not questions about which a man deliberates and chooses. No. Speaking broadly, he regards the situation in which as a social being he finds himself as the arbiter of his ends, and his station in the social organism as the index of his duties.

For these powers of deliberation and choice are not there full-fledged from the first. They emerge only with experience and the gradual growth of reason; and when at last they come to their maturity, their possessor finds that there are limits to their range of reasonable exercise. By the care of parents, still more by the watchful nurture and discipline of the State, mankind are led, by one inducement or another, and by pains and penalties if nothing else will suffice, to walk in the ways in which they ought to go, and to move steadily, month by month and year by year, upon those ends which it is essential for him who is to be at once good man and good citizen to pursue.

* III, iii, 11.

This is the period of man's tutelage—his tutelage in the family and in the State—his tutelage as a member of the social organism.*

The time comes when these years of tutelage must be ended. The man comes of age as a moral being; and with the development of reason he begins to take the conduct of his life into his own hands. It is a momentous transition. It is the transition from the morality of leading-strings — the morality of habituation — to the higher morality of independent judgment.† But when the transition is made, it is no part of wisdom to think that we ought to use our reason to reconstruct our lives from the foundations, and to fall to deliberating about the fundamental duties (or ends) of life. Far otherwise. The man of practical wisdom will use his reason rather in recognising and in accepting these great fundamental obligations that have been impressed upon his soul during the years when habituation was doing its work, and when private and public authority were conspiring to turn the desires to the steadfast pursuit of worthy and noble ends. All that is needful here is that men should become conscious of ends which—thanks to parents, guardians and legislators—they have been in their own lives pursuing for many a day.

This is the way in which, according to Aristotle, men learn their ends. As he thinks, there is no other way. It is not to be expected of any man that he should think out anew for himself the fundamental ends or duties of life. What is to be expected of him (and he will never attain his full stature as a moral being without it) is that he should become fully conscious of what these ends and duties are, and for the rest of his life go on to pursue them with open eyes and independent judgment. For it

* X, ix, 8, 9. † Cf. VI, xiii, 5.

is in this way, by frankly accepting these fundamental ends, and not by deliberating about them as if they were matter of choice, that mankind will achieve that full and many-sided realisation of their powers which (as we saw at the outset) is the supreme end of life.

Not that this will leave little for deliberation to do. It is one thing to apprehend our ends. It is another to find the means. A long way often lies between.* And in the complex, variable, and baffling conditions of moral action, it may well tax all our powers to think out the means to our ends, and to hit that difficult and precarious path of choice which (as we have seen above) is beset by so many possibilities of blundering and disaster. It is here we have the true province of deliberation; and it is here that practical wisdom will prove its quality.

Aristotle does not underestimate this task. Has he not told us that "It is a hard task to be good"? But he never doubts that it is a task in which the practical reason can prove victorious. There is a passage in which, in winding up his account of practical wisdom, Aristotle declares that "If a man have but the single virtue of practical wisdom, all the other virtues will be his likewise,"† He does not say this simply because (as we have seen) he holds that no one can be practically wise till he has served a long apprenticeship in the moral virtues. There is the further fact that he who has won his way to this crowning excellence will for all time to come stand secure. Because, no matter where his duty may call him, be it to the battle-field, or to civic life, to the management of property, or to the administration of justice, he will never fail, by the union of habitual desire for noble ends deliberative faculty and discriminating choice, to decide and do just what the circumstances of the hour demand.

* III, iii, 11. † VI, xiii, 6.

Dark days may come. Material resources may fail, and knowledge itself may vanish away.* But practical wisdom never faileth.

No, it never faileth—in *practical affairs*. But, then, we must remember that Aristotle did not think that practical affairs were the greatest things in life. For it remains to be said that those who think morality the highest and most truly godlike thing on earth, and who follow the Stoics and Kant in proclaiming practical reason paramount, will find no encouragement in Aristotle's *Ethics*,† even though we have not hesitated to call him the prophet of practical wisdom.

For to the moral life, as he regards it, despite all its shining and manly virtues with practical wisdom as their crown, there still cling limitations and frustrations. It is deeply immersed in the world of change where ends are for ever apt to be thwarted by untoward conditions, or by irrational or refractory desires. So far, it is never fully intelligible. Nor can it attain a completely abiding satisfaction. For it is intermittent in its activities, which cannot evade the coming of the hours of weariness and exhaustion; and in all its eager strivings in market, city or camp, it is for ever restlessly reaching out after further and still further ends.‡ Not least, it is inexorably dependent upon externals; not, indeed, in the shape of luxuries or large possessions—for which Aristotle has a settled contempt—but in the reasonable guise of resources, equipment, instruments without which the virtues would never come to the birth. “It is impossible, or at least not easy, to act nobly without some furniture of fortune,”§ so runs one of many characteristic avowals. And though there are passages in which he rises almost to Stoic self-

* VI, v, 8. † Cf. *esp.*, VI, vii, 4. ‡ X, vii, 6 and 7.

§ I, viii, 15 and 16; and cf. X, viii, 4 and 9.

sufficingness, as when he describes the hero who, knowing better than all others the worth of life, lays it down on the field; or the nobility of soul that only shines forth the brighter because it has fallen on evil days, still the fact remains that the moral life, just because it is a life of self-realisation *through action*, inexorably demands some sphere, some resources, some instruments, and, indeed, in the long run, if it is to come to maturity, nothing less than what the well-furnished Greek State offered to its citizens.

It is otherwise with the life of science and philosophy. It has more to give because it has less to ask. As one reads the words in which Aristotle describes it in his Tenth Book,* the mind goes irresistibly to the self-sufficing poverty of Spinoza, or to the serene austerity of Epictetus, or to the frugal spirituality of Wordsworth or Carlyle. Enough to live upon; the priceless leisure that the scholar and thinker know how to fill with strenuous work; a small circle of kindred spirits; the uninterrupted flow of thought that is unvexed by the cares and passions of public life, and serenely exempt from the fatigues and exhaustions which are the lot of all who toil for practical ends; above all the perpetual presence of those supreme objects of thought, the system of nature and the being of God—this is the kind of life that can alone draw forth what is best and most enduring in man. Nor can one wonder that this ideal was actually, in later times, impressed into the service as a plea for that ascetic withdrawal from the world which led the mystic to live in contemplation of the vision.

It is, indeed, thus that what is most akin to the religious spirit—so conspicuous by its absence in Aristotle's delineation of moral action—may come into human

* X, vii.

life. Not that it can so come, at any rate in its fulness, except to the comparatively few. For this higher life—higher immeasurably as Aristotle thinks—is never in *The Ethics* supposed to be possible except in and through a civilised community. And from this it follows that the leisure* that may be filled by great thoughts and scientific problems can only be won for some by the leisureless days of industrial, civic, and military life in which the mass of citizens play their part. Nor is it to be supposed that, even under the more favouring intellectual conditions of the Greek State, the rank and file of citizens (to say nothing of the vast substratum of slaves) were either by predilection or faculty capable of the “higher” life. It remained then, as it remains now, for the few.

Yet it does not follow that this ideal of “the theoretic life” has no significance and no encouragement for many who are not by express calling and vocation men of science or thinkers. After all, the Aristotelian man of affairs and the thinker are not in nature different. They are alike citizens of one and the same State. There is no political or social wall of partition between them. They are above all partakers in the same human prerogative of reason. Grant that this reason finds in the two types widely divergent lines of development—divergent as is the wisdom of the statesman from the reasoning insight of the philosopher. Grant that the statesman who is philosopher is as hard to find in actual experience as the philosopher who is statesman. (That dream of Plato!) True. But all this does not carry the conclusion that those whose lot it is to lead what Aristotle thought the lower life of affairs need be regarded as shut out from the life of science and speculation. In Greece, at anyrate, the two lives were not so divided. Did not historians,

* σχολή, which is emphatically contrasted with amusement and recreation.

poets, philosophers play their part in stormy scenes of war and politics? Were not soldiers and statesmen numbered among the votaries of literature and the disciples of philosophy? This being so, we cannot suppose that it was to the men of science or the philosophers only of the ancient world, it is certainly not to them only in our modern world that there is significance in the memorable exhortation with which Aristotle closes his panegyric of the higher life:—

If, then, Reason is a divine thing in comparison with our human nature; then also is the life of Reason a divine thing in comparison with the life of man. Let us give no heed to those who urge us as being men to think the things of humanity, and as mortals to think the things of mortality. Rather let us, to the limits of our powers, play the immortal, and in all we do, do it so as to live in accordance with the best that is in us.*

* X, vii, 8.

THE APOCRYPHA OF SHAKSPERE.

By JAMES J. FOARD.

THAT much should be written about the foremost man of all the ages is inevitable; that so much of what is written should be untrue is perhaps not less inevitable, but is, nevertheless, a melancholy deduction from human infirmity. It is a humiliating conclusion at best, that while all the material facts concerning the great poet's life could be contained in a duodecimo volume, it would require a vast library to enshrine a tithe of the fiction associated with his existence and biography. The manufacture and dissemination of spurious fables, professing to deal with his character, conduct, habits of life, resources and attainments, his plays and their composition, goes on unceasingly, while the few authentic truths that shed light on his work and history, accumulated with care and assiduity, are scarcely augmented in a generation. What is conjectural, mythic, or fabulous, or, in a phrase, apocryphal, increases by leaps and bounds. It seems hardly an exaggeration to say that we have entered on a crusade to discover who can invent the greatest number of malicious, derogatory, and improbable conjectures and assertions as to the poet's life, conduct, and character, with a view to foist them on the public as veracious biography. We have volumes upon volumes published, with the pages in a non-existent cypher, direct from Lord St. Alban to the non-veracious recipients, to prove that the poet buried in Stratford Church was a confirmed charlatan and impostor, a man of the lowest origin and of the most depraved

character, ignorant and unable to read or write, and, at the best, was a low and profligate actor of singular stupidity and abandoned morals. To what end it is impossible to say. Yet we have professed scientists, nominal legal luminaries, county court judges, and an ex-law lord all joined in this pernicious folly, and my paper this evening is devoted in part to an inquiry into this singular imposture, and an investigation of this and other fantastic fables so created.

There is probably no better authenticated fact in all history than that a native of Stratford-on-Avon, born in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, a sometime actor and playwright, by name William Shakspeare, was a surprising genius, and one of the most striking personalities in the history of the world. His monument, there existent, testifies to this fact. The proofs of his birth, his success in his vocation, his subsequent prosperity, residence and death in his native town, are manifold and unimpeachable. Yet about these simple incidents a parasitic growth of fable and misrepresentation, of fiction and mendacity, have arisen which threatens to obscure and even extinguish the naked veracity. Well might Pilate sorrowfully ask "What is truth?" when so plain and artless a tale can be so perverted.

Let us then try to epitomise some of these heretical and monstrous fables, the creations of professed fabulists, of pretended literary experts, of Baconian theorists, ignorant copyists, superior investigators, and what not, which are capable of being classified, into something like order. There are, first and foremost, the professed schismatics, bent on proving, at all hazards and in spite of reason and truth, that Francis Bacon, who subsequently became Lord Chancellor, Viscount Verulam and St. Alban, wrote all Shakspeare's plays, and who are willing to

descend to any fraud, or invention, or device to secure their end. This is one form of blatant and assertive fable. Another example is the species of fiction created by professed biographers, who, too ignorant or too idle to pursue the truth by honest research, have invented every phase of detraction to supply the features which, but for their negligence or incompetence, would have been discovered. Again, there are professed experts who, to attain a brief reputation for superior sagacity, or research, or brilliant acumen, have created "new facts," and "novel particulars," and forged documents, risked impossible surmises as established truths, and have literally flooded legitimate knowledge with vulgar gossip, malevolent theories, and idle and calumnious suggestions in the guise of actual history. These are some of the varied forms of illusion to which the title of my paper refers.

It would be impossible to trace the origin of all the differing phases of fable that in the last two hundred years have accrued, and gained credence as truth. Rowe was the first to retail the pretty fiction—that the poet was a poacher and something worse; for in his precise words "he was engaged in robbing a park that belonged to Sir Thomas Lucy, of Charlecote, near Stratford, and made a ballad on that baronet, and was prosecuted by him." Now, as Sir Thomas had no park at that time, and poaching was an offence that could be prosecuted only in the star chamber, and was in no sense a robbery, but a mere trespass, we may give as much credence as we like to the belief so inaccurately formulated that the poet was a criminal and felonious offender, against the game laws. He certainly did not write a ballad on the subject or the man, as the same biographer also falsely alleges. Nor is it true that he, the poet, penned a doggrel epitaph of a scurrilous nature on John A.

Combe; because we know from Camden that this alleged libel was a common form in use, and was in existence in the guise of fugitive verse long before Shakspeare. Nor was it even remotely true, as Rowe declared, that the poet was a man who "lived in a state of almost universal licence and ignorance"; or more true than that he was one of ten children, and had three daughters and no son, which was of course altogether false. Now this nucleus of an inconceivably indefinite apocrypha created since, may or may not have had a fractional foundation of truth. But if we compare it with Archdeacon Davies' professedly authentic account of the incident, published a few years before, that Sir Thomas Lucy, on account of the author's stealing "venison and rabbits, had him (Shakspeare) oft whipt and sometimes imprisoned," we see how little reliance can be placed on either of these conflicting and repugnant narratives. No doubt, however the story arose, it had one origin, but, presumably, never was in existence in any tangible or defined form until at least a hundred years after the event it pretended to recount. If we recall the prejudices of the Puritans against stage plays and stage players, against whom no form of invective or innuendo was too bad, we may still further discount the tale. The poet certainly was never whipt and never imprisoned. There is, I admit, a possibility of a certain scintilla of truth in the story based on a passage in "The Merry Wives of Windsor," as revised and amended on the edition of 1602, and as suggested by Shallow, "*You have beaten my men, kill'd my deer, and broken open my lodge.*" No doubt the poet satirised Lucy in that reference, but this is the only probable or reasonable foundation of the scandal. But Shallow made the charge, and may have had no evidence, even if he suspected the poet, to sustain it. Possibly the story was only invented to explain the

gentle author's irreverence to the justice. But my objection is not to this fable, true or false in its inception, but to the hecatombs of falsehood that have been framed and based upon it. Of detraction of the same kind is the absurd narrative of Aubrey, save that it could have had no real foundation, viz., that Shakspeare's father was a butcher, and that he was a butcher's apprentice, to which story, invented or created by an octogenarian sexton and parish clerk as a marvel to tickle the ears of wonder-seeking excursionists, Dr. Farmer made the addition, as he vouched, on the secondhand authority of Warton, as derived from maggotty-headed old Aubrey,* that Shakspeare, while a boy, exercised his father's trade as a butcher; but when he killed a calf, he would do it in a high style, and make a speech, and that a passage in "Henry VI," part 2, act iii, sc. 1, l. 210, was a reminiscence of his early prowess.

And as the butcher takes away the calf,
And binds the wretch and beats it when it strays,
And brings it to the bloody slaughter-house.

And that it was the playwright's early experience induced the imagery. So when Hamlet said,

There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough hew them as we may.

This was alleged by Capel to be the embodiment of the author's early experience in shaping his father's meat skewers, and autobiographic of his early training.†

* Dr. Farmer cited Aubrey at secondhand, but discredited his authority by appending Anthony Wood's estimate of his coadjutor's, viz., Aubrey's, merits, thus:—"A pretender to antiquities, roving, maggotty-headed, and sometimes little better than crazed, and, being exceedingly credulous, would stuff his many letters sent to A. W. with folleries and misinformations."

"It was Aubrey also who charged Raleigh's memory with theft."

† Rowe declared that Shakspeare's father was a considerable dealer in wool, which certainly accords better with that of his being high bailiff, and a suit in a local court of record, 17 June, 1556, "*Siche v. John Shakspeare*," declares him a glover, which was probably correct.

Of this species of factitious biography, which would be amusing were it not so sad, generally published and accepted by the world at large, let me epitomise some other equally depreciating episodes and fables. That he deserted his wife and children for eleven years. That he drank himself to death with Michael Drayton and Ben Johnson—a fiction of the charitably-minded Rev. John Ward, rector of Stratford-upon-Avon, of the date of 1662; neither Drayton nor Jonson ever alluding to the event which proves it a most improbable conjecture. That he commenced his London life by holding horses, a story invented by drunken Shiels, the editor of Cibber's *Lives of the Poets*, in 1753, also on the professed authority of Rowe and Davenant, but very long removed, a story embellished by Johnson, with additions—Shiels being in his employ—and which is actually recorded by a celebrated recent biographer as authentic, because Richard Burbage kept a livery stable at Smithfield. The precise nexus between the facts that an actor or his relative kept livery stables, therefore, Shakspeare had in his employ servants known as Shakspeare's boys utterly unknown to all his contemporaries, being of the strangest; and, again, that he formed part of a drunken challenging party of toppers who made a match for a debauch, Stratford v. Bidford, and made doggrel verses on his exploit, a fable not less calumnious and defamatory than the rest.

This is the species of contemptible malevolence and pitiful narrative that English readers have for 200 years been content to swallow about the greatest man of their race, and which so-called biographers still continue to supply upon demand to their readers.

Surely some degree of intelligence and candour should be exerted in testing every evil or malignant report presented by ill-nature, ignorance, or obvious defamation to

our understanding before we accept it as truth. This caution we are compelled to exercise in every-day life. Yet experience has shown that this obligation of duty in literature has never existed or been exercised. We accept any story that traduces a great man. We believe it at once. It is so probable. Just as Dr. Johnson believed in the Cock Lane ghost, and Shiels' reckless nonsense about the holding horses, and added to and enlarged it. The authentic and undeniable contemporary evidence of the poet's character, conduct, and personality, to which alone all sound rules of evidence offer credence, were at once discarded in favour of the most imbecile and fatuous gossip, of evident manufacture, unsupported by a single probability, simply because it was calumnious. When we attempt to investigate the slander, what do we find? That Shiel vouched it as derived from Rowe by three or four removes, when we know that Rowe, if he had ever heard of and credited it, would have used it in the various biographies he issued during his life, viz. : in 1714, 1723, 1725, 1726, 1728. If he had known or believed it to be true, it was much too material a feature to be thus disregarded.

It is really time that readers should boldly refuse to accept the silly taradiddles that obviously malicious or foolishly credulous writers tender them without examination, and without any basis of fact or real foundation.

Unluckily or luckily, the art of biography, as it is known to us to-day, illustrating Mr. Carlyle's prodigious mind and indigestion, and Mrs. Carlyle's tantrums in thirty volumes, voluminous and non-luminous, was not dreamed of in Elizabeth's day. There were no lives nor elegies out of the peerage. A stage player was not in society. No valiant Eros or Crito, conscious of his master's honour or worth, was in homage constrained to

furnish the life of a poet for after ages. The inscription on the Stratford tomb proves that there was then a recognition of the dramatist's greatness, but there was no ceremonial which then insisted on the publication of a man's infirmities and follies in several volumes such as now obtains. The age which succeeded did not esteem the actor-poet. It preferred the swagger of Ben Jonson, and Dryden apologised, for honouring him, for he was already deemed obsolete and barbarous. The civil war stifled all association with the stage, and when a race of biographers and editors appeared, they were all condescending, supercilious, superior, and ignorant, like Pope, Hanmer, Warburton, and Theobald, content to be idle and indifferent, rather than intelligent or inquisitive. Since that day and up to the present hour we have been so satisfied with reckless assertion and the repetition of invented and imputed scandals, that we are perplexed by the most elementary features of the poet's existence. When, a hundred years after the death of the dramatist, attention was turned to the point, the local gossip of some irresponsible dotard or pothouse oracle was eagerly seized and baptised as "local legend or well authenticated tradition," and so honoured. There was no lack of material, and it has served ever since. Yet we have never ascertained how the poet's name should be spelt, how he usually wrote it, the day of his birth or death, when he was married and where, or whether, as modern quidnuncs assure us, he was an actor and no poet, and a mere fraud upon his fellows and friends, who acquired competence and New Place by passing off another man's plays as his own.

To the editors and biographers I have enumerated, Steevens and Malone succeeded. The former, who was stigmatised by D'Israeli as the "Puck of literature" for

his mischievous and perverted industry, and malicious inventions, we may at once dismiss. Malone, however, was of other metal. He was an honourable and perfervid disciple of the mighty master. In intention most honest, of an indefatigable zeal, content, like Ion, to be a servitor in the temple of Apollo, and perform the most ignoble offices in maintaining the sanctity of the shrine; but, on the other hand, credulous to a fault. He was thus, unconsciously, the source of fully three-fourths of the mischievous nonsense that hangs about the memory of the illustrious bard that he so dutifully and with so much self-negation served. He was the first to invent, it is true only hypothetically, the absurd fiction which maintains to the present hour that Shakspeare first commenced in 1591 to write for the stage. Implicitly relying on Dr. Johnson's sagacity, he accepted strictly the fable about holding horses, and concluded the poet could not therefore have written before. In his *Chronology*, first published in 1788, there occurs this passage:—"If I *were to indulge a conjecture*, I should name the middle of the year 1591 as the era when our author commenced as writer for the stage, at which time he was somewhat more than 27 years old." He, unfortunately, proceeded to give his reasons for this conjecture, which are in the highest degree inaccurate and absurd, an initial difficulty being that Shakspeare in 1592 was a recognised factotum in dramatic composition, and three years previously had been assailed for his success as an author, and in five brief years contemplated his retirement to live as a country gentleman at New Place in 1597.

The poet's latest famous biographer, Mr. Lee, in the *Dictionary of Biography*, accepts this surmise as a fact, and agrees with Dr. Farmer "that there is no external evidence of anything having been produced by the poet

before 1592." What is meant by "external evidence" in this conjunction it is impossible to understand. All the evidence is external. That he was writing, or had written the "Comedy of Errors," in 1587; that "Henry the Sixth" was famous early in 1592, as Nash, in *Prince Pennilesse*, then suggested; that the poet in that year was by Greene reviled in the *Groatsworth of Wit* as the greatest Shakescene in the country, and as a mere Johannes Factotum and Esop's crow, beautified with the feathers of other disappointed authors, himself included. The testimony of Spenser in *Colin Clout's Come Home Again* was certainly external, and was vouchsafed to the poet as "Aetion" in December 27th, 1591. Greene had reviled him as a novice and pupil of Marlowe in "Perimides" as early as 1588; and Spenser, in lines addressed to the wife of the poet's then patron, in whose service he was, in the *Tears of the Muses*, written in 1589, glorified him as the newly discovered genius of dramatic writing; Nash, that biting satirist, having previously denounced him in 1589 for copying Seneca in "Hamlet," in the words—

For Seneca let blood, line by line and page by page,
At length must needs die to our stage,

as well as his adaptation of the ghost in the play, and the phrases "Hyrcean tyger," "Ossa on Pelion," Niobe, all tears," &c., so that Mr. Lee's phrase, "external evidence," seems singularly inappropriate.

This instance, indeed, offers the evidence on which I insist—that the merest haphazard guesses of Malone have been accepted as approved gospel truths by all the indolent bookmaking fraternity ever since. To furnish other proofs, Malone, in the very passage already cited, in a note, suggested that the author of "Hamlet," so sneered at by Nash in 1589, was not Shakspeare, but Kyd, thus:—

“The person whom Nash had in contemplation in this passage was, I believe, Thomas Kyd.” And this “I believe,” absolutely without credible foundation, has been accepted as proof positive ever since by hundreds of authors, including Mr. Lee, who avers positively “that the first author of ‘Hamlet’ was Thomas Kyd,” who was as incapable of writing it as of inditing the *Pickwick Papers*, and who assuredly never ventured on a play of that name.

I cannot venture on exposing this phase of fable or apocrypha at greater length, but must be content with presenting a few more instances. To mislead Malone, who was a rival editor, Steevens maliciously pretended to him that he had discovered a MS. play by Thomas Middleton, called “The Witch,” which was prior in date to “Macbeth,” and enshrined all the magic and witch scenes in the national poet’s tragedy, and that Shakspeare had simply borrowed or conveyed them into his play. This in simple but emphatic English was a lie, and before he died Malone discovered he had been duped, and recanted absolutely the suggestion he made upon it in 1788, “that Shakspeare was first indebted to Middleton for the magic introduced in ‘Macbeth.’” In truth, “The Witch” could not have been, if played at all, produced before 1613, and conjecturally was never known or heard of by Shakspeare, if ever, before he had finally renounced all authorship. I need only refer to some of these scandalous mendacities again and again reiterated. That Shakspeare’s father was a papist, and wrote a confession of faith, which was discovered by Mosely, a bricklayer, on April 29, 1757, and handed by him to that fraudulent Corypheus, Jordan, who disclosed it, after Mosely’s death in 1787, to Malone in 1790, as well as “the popular local legend,” so called, about the Bidford Topers, both origin-

ated by Jordan in 1762, and accepted by Mr. Lee as indubitable. That almost every play of Shakspeare's was based on an existing drama by some other unknown author. That "Measure for Measure," "Macbeth," "The Merchant of Venice," "Henry the Eighth," "King Lear," "Antony and Cleopatra," "Henry the Fourth," "Henry the Fifth," "Richard the Second," "Richard the Third," "Hamlet," etc., were all existing dramas before Shakspeare's day. A perfectly monstrous theory, repugnant to all verity and reason, yet accepted, with slight variations and amendments as being the truth, ever since by so-called biographers. And, finally, that Shakspeare did not commence to write love stories till he was 27, and was getting ancient and bald.

There is, as already indicated, another aspect of fable which one has great difficulty in approaching with philosophic calm or serenity, viz., that the national poet was an impostor, and did not compose his own plays, but that they were written for him by Sir Francis Bacon. As Sir Francis became a titular peer as Lord St. Alban, it is perhaps appropriate that this belief originated in America. Miss Delia Bacon, who died in a lunatic asylum, and who absurdly believed herself descended from the great Chancellor, who had no children, first propounded the idea in 1856. In the same year a person called Smith, whose name you have perhaps met with before, wrote a pamphlet confirming this view. From that period to the present hour hundreds of books and thousands of essays have been furnished "as corroborative detail" to the same end. Pretended messages, addressed to the high priests of this cult, Mr. Ignatius Donnelly, Dr. Orville Owen, and Mrs. Gallup, direct from the pseudo nobleman to these worthies, in a cryptic language that their superhuman intelligence (in which the peer had every confidence) alone under-

stands, have been received by them. Mrs. Gallup moreover assures us, in further confirmation, that the author was a legitimate son of Queen Elizabeth by the Earl of Leicester, and even the rightful heir to the British crown. Putting aside for a moment this too flattering compliment that the poet was of royal birth, I might suggest that no one out of Bedlam could believe such rantipole nonsense, but then I should be, I am sorry to say, greatly discredited. In fact, a Lord Justice of Appeal, a Bencher of the Inns of Court, several minor or county court judges, Mr. Malloch, some scientists so called, and, of course, many journalists, none of them yet under restraint, profess to accept this nonsense as truth.

Some years ago an insane litigant in the court of chancery threw a rotten egg at V.-C. Malins (then presiding in his court) upon some fancied injustice. The V.-C. then blandly suggested that some mistake had been made in the course of procedure. That egg, said he, must have been meant for my brother Bacon in the next court. The V.-C. little imagined that mere aptitude of name would lead to the bombardment of Shakspeare's, or shall I say Bacon's, grave with such missiles. But, in fact, the fusilade continues. Six cipher stories hold the field. Lord Penzance has left a bequest to the public in the form of a judicial summing up, expressed in lucid and admirable English, to the effect that W. Shakspere, of Stratford, who wrote his name with two E's, was an impostor and cheat, a mere actor; and that the busy politician, essayist, and philosopher, who could not write a line of blank verse, and who thought in Latin rather than in English, judging from his style, wrote all the plays attributed falsely to this Shakspere with two E's. Moreover, that Lord St. Alban was Shakespeare with three E's. He vouches as his witnesses, Mr. Appleton

Morgan, author of *The Shakespeare Myth*; Mr. Theobald, in his *Shakespeare Dethroned*; Mr. Nathaniel Holmes, an American judge; as well as Mrs. Gallup, and Messrs. Donnelly and Owen. With such precedents it is only natural that C.-C. Judge Bompas follows suit, and is positive that a mere vulgar, illiterate provincial actor could never have achieved such world-famous literature.

The first author to emphasise Shakspeare's ignorance was Mr. W. S. Smith, and he also invented the idea "that he never claimed the plays as his own." Mr. Theobald extended this by speaking of the poet "as the literary porter and hackney to Bacon." Mr. George Wilkes, writing "from an American point of view," says, that he commenced life as a deer stealer and drunkard, that he was a base, cringing parasite, that he and his father were Catholics, and that the poet, in his works, "unwarrantably attacks, sneers at, derides and discredits Protestants and Puritans, and never fails to treat Catholics with absolute respect and reverence" (Witness, "King John," act iii, sc. 1, l. 149, *et seq.*), and his comment on Wolsey, by Queen Katherine ("King Henry VIII," act iv, l. 33, *et seq.*); another writer, Mr. W. G. Thorpe, F.S.A., suggests that Shakspeare kept a gambling hell in 1599, and that he purchased New Place (in April, 1597) out of the money made by rooking an infant young gentleman.

But surely it is unnecessary to repeat all this unfounded and scurrilous gossip, or the suggestions of the poet's ignorance and nodding acquaintance with his horn book and nonsense of the same kind. If we discredit Aubrey's suggestion, that the poet had served as an usher in a school, we know from the dramatist's poems and earliest plays that he had Ovid at his finger ends, must have been thoroughly imbued with classic imagery, and much more saturated with all the essentials of antique life,

than the major part of the world, at the close of a long university career.

But at this point I am tempted to diverge for an instant. On the summit of old Northumberland House, in the Strand, facing Trafalgar Square, there once stood a gigantic stone and plaster lion, with a tail well nigh as long as its body, horizontally extended. Theodore Hook, a practised practical joker, one busy evening placed himself in full view of the statue, and, striking an attitude, professed himself entranced, exclaiming "it wags, by heaven it wags." A crowd soon collected, and before an hour had passed, a hundred persons had discovered that the tail really moved to and fro. "It decidedly waived," said some, "it described an ellipse;" for the necessary wealth of corroborative detail is never wanting in such cases.

Unluckily, Mr. Phillips, in his in many respects invaluable biography, without any warrant in fact, in an evil moment penned a random statement: that Shakspeare, when he left Stratford for London, "was all but destitute of polished accomplishments," a merely hazardous conjecture, opposed to Aubrey's assertion, derived from Beeston, that he was for a time "a schoolmaster in the country in his younger years," and most absolutely to substantial fact. The poet had been trained under a good classical scholar, and a fellow of his college, and was so saturated with Ovid, and so familiar with Seneca and Plautus, that he was able to produce, within two or three years of leaving home, "The Comedy of Errors," "Love's Labour Lost," and "The Two Gentlemen of Verona," from Italian sources; and, aided by Seneca, to occupy his leisure with the story of "Hamlet," "Venus and Adonis," and "Lucrece." The usher story being thoroughly confirmed in the portrait of Holofernes, with his scraps of

Latin, his fastidiousness as to pronunciation, and his homage of the good old Mantuan.

Mr. Phillips, conjecturally also, further continued his narrative, viz.: "That the poet was removed prematurely, viz.: at 13, from school; residing with illiterate relatives in a bookless neighbourhood, and was thrown into the midst of occupations adverse to scholastic progress." This is the old butcher story, with its calf killing and meat skewer shaping put into euphemistic English. It is, of course, false and unfounded from beginning to end, as baseless as Macbeth's air-drawn dagger, or the Dogger Bank phantom torpedo boats; but county court judge Webb, Mr. Albert F. Calvert (1902), a Cambridge graduate, Lord Penzance, Mr. Theobald, Mr. Harold Bayley, and Mr. Grant White supply all the necessary confirmatory and corroborative details. Thus, Mr. White says, "that in the whole village of Stratford" (why village, seeing it was a corporate town) "the school lessons consisted of A B C and the Lord's prayer from a horn book, and that all the tradesmen and peasants, to which class Shakspeare belonged, spoke an incomprehensible patois." Mr. Harold Bayley, another inspired biographer, adds, "that the poet's home was in the vicinity of middens, fetid water-courses, mud walls and piggeries, in the most dirty, unseemly, ill-paved and wretched looking town in all Britain, and that when the poet fled to London to avoid imprisonment at 22" (pray note that), "we may be sure he had never seen half-a-dozen books other than his horn book, and that probably there were not half-a-dozen other books in Stratford." Thus the lion's tail has continued to wag.

I could extend the citations from this species of modern creative and imaginative biography almost indefinitely. This is the nonsense written about a man

whom his contemporary, Ben Jonson, who knew him personally, addressed in rhapsody :—

Soul of the age.

The applause! delight! the wonder of our stage.

And adds :—

While I confess thy writings to be such

As neither man nor muse can praise too much.

Dismissing this species of American or impurely fanciful biography, I will briefly pass to the skilled expert and superior person order of fiction. I have mentioned that in 1634 a roguish bookseller—to sell a reprint of “The Two Noble Kinsmen,” written by Fletcher—invented the story that it was written in collaboration with Shakspeare, and that Steevens mischievously adopted and developed this hint, which has been accepted as established fact by all the poet’s biographers, or nearly all, ever since.

The fable that it was by these authors, was revived in 1833 by Mr. Spalding, and this portentous discovery, or re-discovery, was vigorously discussed between that date and 1876. The expert critics—who could indicate with mathematical accuracy, the precise arc of the circle that the lion’s tail described when it wagged—were prepared, not merely to show that these authors collaborated, but one of them, the Rev. Fredk. Fleay, was able to exploit his superhuman acumen and critical sagacity, and point out the very acts, scenes, situations, and speeches to a line, half-line, or phrase, which each contributed. By similarly transcendent penetration, he proves to us also that “King Lear” was composed by Peel and Lodge; that “The Merchant of Venice” was not written by Shakspeare, but by Dekker; that “The Taming of the Shrew” was by Dekker and Kyd; that “Troilus and Cressida” was by Wilkins; and that the Stratford-on-Avon drama-

tist neither wrote "Macbeth" nor "Timon," "Pericles," "Titus Andronicus," "Julius Cæsar," "Henry the Sixth," nor "Henry the Eighth;" also that Robert Wilson, one of the original actors in the Earl of Leicester's company, was the great master-poet's instructor in 1589, when, in fact, Wilson had been dead and buried many years, all of which exquisite nonsense proves that a lie once started at scratch is never overtaken. Malone, unfortunately, conceived that one-third only of "Henry the Sixth" was Shakspeare's; this discovery of prior authorship determined Mr. Fleay to go one better, and he succeeded as I have pointed out.

Malone was similarly indirectly responsible, by giving credence to Steevens, for the fable that Middleton wrote "The Witch," and that Shakspeare based his play of "Macbeth" upon it, and that "Julius Cæsar" copied a play of Lord Sterling's on the same subject. Mr. Fleay, altering his original view, has also told us that "The Taming of the Shrew" was by Lodge as a parody on Kyd. But I should only weary you by recapitulating these and the infinite other proofs of this specious critical discrimination which are literally, in the auctioneer's phrase, too numerous to mention.

Steevens, among his other mischievous antics, pretended to discover a letter of George Peele's, which referred to meeting Shakspeare at the "Mermaid," which letter has figured up to the present year as a reality. Of course it was a forgery. Ireland, Steevens, Cunningham, and Jordan were all forgers, and adepts at the art of discovering new and pretended episodes in the poet's biography. But the chief offender and culprit in this art was Mr. Payne Collier, a very devout and learned, as well as enthusiastic Shaksperian student, who undoubtedly rendered considerable service to Elizabethan literature,

apart from his misguided and vicious ingenuity. A man of singular erudition and attainments, of most unimpeachable respectability, by ordinary worldly tests, a churchwarden and prosperous literary man, he devoted nearly the whole of his busy life between 1830 and his death in 1883 to the creation of supposititious facts, spurious documents, forged entries and interpolations in attested state papers and public archives, in imputed reference to the pursuits, conduct and life of the poet. These forgeries, one of the earliest of which was that which proved the poet to be one of the sixteen shareholders in the Blackfriars Theatre in 1589, and the twelfth on the list; and another, proving the value of the shares in 1608 in the same theatre, with other apocryphal facts which form the backbone of the Baconian literature, and, unluckily, have also been absorbed, and have passed into the current stream of historical research as accepted and established history.

The general purport of Mr. Collier's forgeries was to present striking and undiscovered features in Shakspeare's life and biography; to irradiate the poet's existence by new and hitherto unascertained facts, illustrative of his success in life, his early prosperity, the value of his interests in different theatres, the date of the production of his plays, his places of residence, early partners, and other comparatively insignificant details—but all to the end of creating a wholly fictitious biography. Once started, a fraud of this kind—like Steeven's discovery of Shakspeare's hand in "The Two Noble Kinsmen," or Malone's, that the poet did not write before 1591—fortified by corroborative detail, goes on with cumulative strength for ever. The fashionable modern biographer, who is rewarded by a special grant for his honesty and erudition, adopts these simple and obvious untruths as

wholly genuine, and reproduces them with the strength of recent authority—Mr. Sidney Lee being not one of the least offenders. In truth, there is no story too improbable, too scandalous, too opposed to reason, history, or verity, that cannot be secured—not merely sanction, but more—the immortality of truth.

But there is another more recent and pernicious source of fiction than Ireland's or even Collier's forgeries, viz., the constructive biography. This is an invention of the past fifty or sixty years. It pretends to gather from the Sonnets, or the reputed facts of the poet's career, or from such imaginary features as I have described, proofs of the poet's immorality, baseness as a friend, depravity as a husband, rascality as a citizen and man. From their own inner consciousness they, the biographers—much as Sir Walter Scott, from his own infirmity, declared the dramatist lame, and the poet Moore a depraved husband—read into these spontaneous and unrestrained outpourings of the poet's lighter muse, every incident of vulgar and demoralising intrigue, of pure pandarism, of filthy sensualism and dishonour, that their base natures could conceive, not merely as a possible, but as a probable, or, as some suggest, inevitable biography. In this way Mr. Oscar Wilde pretended, on the interpretation—his own interpretation—of one particular Sonnet, his authority for his own unspeakable conduct. In similar but more harmless fashion, Dr. Brandes has ventured to declare that from the play of "Coriolanus" he avouches the poet to have been a scandalous sycophant, a mere parasite of the wealthier classes, a hater of his fellow-men, and a servile toady of the governing aristocracy. In like manner, following Mr. Theobald, his Honour Judge Webb proves that Lord Bacon wrote all Shakespeare's plays; and, after the same fashion, Dr. Creighton, in *Shakspeare's*

Story of his Life, would have us believe that Ophelia was Mary Fitton; that Sir W. Knollys was Polonius; that "Troilus and Cressida" is a bare record of the poet's own experiences, and that "The Tempest" is similarly his life expressed in a play—Trinculo being Marston; Stephano, as being a drunken butler, Ben Jonson; that Yorick was Tarleton; and Prospero, Shakspeare.

Now it is by these inventive and inductive, or shall I say seductive and productive, processes of creating biography that modern literature is distinguished. Positive assertion, which requires neither industry, honesty, nor intelligence, is tendered in place of investigation or accuracy. Mr. Moore, in his *Life of Byron*, anxious to excuse that nobleman for his domestic infelicity, and palliate his own peccadilloes, suggested for the first time that it was clearly proved and beyond doubt "that Shakspeare deserted his wife and family—three children." This was in 1830, and the baseless story, repeated with aggravations and embellishments, has been again and again repeated ever since.

Mr. De Quincey, in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, who did not live as harmoniously with his spouse as conjugal felicity would dictate, added a variation: "That after four year's conjugal discord," the poet migrated, or translated himself to London—in this following Moore, with a difference, for he adds, citing Dr. Drake and others, that the poet visited Stratford often, and latterly once a year. Aubrey had written: "He was wont to go to his native county once a year."

Mr. Bell, a little later, in *Lardner's Encyclopædia*, 1837, invented the story that Shakspeare was "a forger of pedigrees," for thus it now stands, because on an assignment of arms of 1599, made to John Shakspeare for Shakspeare Arden, which recites a prior grant of 1568-9 to

the same person then produced, when the poet was four years old, there is reference made by the heralds, in the usual heraldic manner, of some supposed services rendered by the poet's ancestors, and Bell declared, without a tittle of proof, that the arms were thus obtained "by false representations, alike discreditable to the poet and his father." Of such representations there is no evidence whatever. The suggestions, no doubt, were the herald's. But if the truth is declared by them, and they avouch themselves "credibly informed," they were made in 1568, and then the poet was four years old. But Mr. Bell's life was similarly full of derogatory and malicious insinuations. He adopted the sonnets as a supposed source for all kinds of base imputations, and declared the poet (in this following Gifford) was the "Coryphæus of profanation."

Thus the game of malignant and scandalous misrepresentation goes merrily on, and the *Dictionary of National Biography*, which surely should have investigated, or enquired into these obvious and self-evident misstatements and scandals, meekly adopts and repeats them as approved canons of belief.

Take, for instance, Mr. F. G. Fleay's malevolent suggestion, based on the idea that we have "no evidence that the poet ever saw his wife between 1587 and 1597," leaving her destitute, and "the palpable indications in the Sonnets that he was intriguing with another woman," and that he visited Stratford on August 11th, 1596—a little contradictory it must be confessed—on the occasion of his son Hamlet's funeral; both assertions being merely malicious surmises based on Moore's worthless statement invented for a purpose in 1830. It might be, on equal grounds of "no evidence," suggested that between these dates Shakspeare never washed himself, nor ate, nor paid

his rates. There is much in his career of which we have no evidence. Surely the suggestion that he visited Stratford once a year, of Aubrey, Dr. Drake, and others, and the fact that he had planned and arranged the purchase of New Place as a permanent residence in 1596, militates against the ill-natured deductions here made, even if the tender reminiscences of his lost child, and his frequent indirect references, in proof of his intense love of the boy, in "King John," "Macbeth," and the "Winter's Tale," did not wholly confute such a disgraceful calumny. Inasmuch as his consent, as heir-at-law, was necessary in the chancery suit of his father and mother as to Asbies, in 1589; moreover, we must, without evidence to the contrary, assume that in so vital a matter, in which his personal concurrence was required, he was in Stratford at this latter date. And thus the venomous hint, that he deserted his wife and children, without making any provision for their maintenance, is shown to be baseless, as it is certainly malicious and defamatory even if we discredit all contemporary evidence, uniformly in homage of a "gentle," honest, noble nature, without stain or blot.

I need not pursue the specific calumnies of the so-called Baconians, because their avowed purpose is to prove that the poet was a disgraceful impostor and cheat, who obtained name and fame by a senseless and impossible fraud. Nor do the Sonnet mongers deserve more attention. Their supposed ingenuity is dependent, like the cipher story, on the discovery of something which does not and never did exist. But one feature is common to both. They all are dependent on the allegation of some fresh proof of the depravity, cowardice, vulgar intrigue, or infamy of the poet of all the ages. Thus, Lord Penzance, in his professedly judicial summing up, which, as might be expected, is expressed in admirably chosen language,

and is in the finest sense temperate, candid, and judicial, takes for granted Mr. Collier's mischievous forgeries as facts; and also accepts every malevolent suggestion of the Baconians and the Sonnet mongers, no matter how preposterous or even impossible they may be, as if they were credible; its only justification being that the judge was supremely ignorant of the subject.

His Honour, Judge Bompas, relies on the proposition that "there is no evidence that Shakspeare was addicted to study." One would have thought that the obvious answer would be—Have you ever seen or read the plays? I don't say he was addicted, it is a vile phrase; but it must be conceded that he read. What are we to say to "Venus and Adonis?" what to the various reminiscences of Ovid, not to be found in Golding or any translation, expressed in "The Tempest?" As instanced in Prospero's speech (act v, sc. i, l. 35), "Ye elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes, and groves;" and a mere recollection of Ovid as of the same poet's "*Sua convulsaque robora terra*," in "Cymbeline;" and the Pyramus and Thisbe episode in the "Midsummer Night's Dream," derived from the same author, and all the thousands of other proofs of assiduous reading and gigantic assimilation.

The tendency to ill-natured credulity, and the preference for the marvellous and scandalous in human nature, really lie at the base of all the Shaksperian false biography. As I have pointed out, Malone, in 1778, in a brief note, tentatively suggested that Nash, in *Menaphon*, had in his contemplation Thomas Kyd as the author of "Hamlet," because he knew that if Shakspeare had produced that tragedy before or in that year, as he had, that it rendered the livery stable story ridiculous, as well as his hypothesis about commencing to write in 1591. Thus,

ever since, all the writers about Shakspeare, without inquiry, have declared that "it certainly was Kyd." Kyd never conceived or wrote any such tragedy. If he did, why did he name it after Shakspeare's only son, then living. A modern biographer, Mr. Lee, to show how certainly he was the author, by way of corroborative detail, has professed to discover that Kyd's father was a scrivener. "There is a river in Macedon, and there is, moreover, a river in Monmouth, look you." On the same grounds precisely, viz., a rash and tentative suggestion of Malone's, who was misled by the holding horses story of Johnson, it has been held, ever since 1788, that Shakspeare only commenced to write for the stage in the middle of 1591, when, in fact, he was a Johannes Factotum, and the only Shakescene of the country in 1592. Mr. Lee accepts this random surmise of the earlier biographer as gospel, in spite of Mr. Knight's, Mr. Staunton's, and Mr. Simpson's views to the contrary, and also of Nash's ridicule, in 1589, of the poet's Italian translations, and all the other unanswerable evidence opposed.

For the fable that Shakspeare did not write "Macbeth," and borrowed all its scenes of magic and incantation from Middleton, we are, as I have already intimated, also indebted to Malone (who had been purposely misled by Steevens); as well as for the suggestion that "Julius Cæsar" was derived from a play of Lord Sterling's with the same title in 1607, whereas it had preceded it by six years, as we know from Weaver's allusion to it in 1601, with a great many other equally derogatory surmises, eagerly seized on by succeeding editors, and actually repeated down to the present time, as well as the grotesque fable that Spenser's reference "to our pleasant Willy" was really to Richard Tarleton or John Lilly, with various like gratuitous, reckless, senseless, and un-

founded suggestions, merely framed to disparagement and fatuity.

There is another phase of apocrypha that cannot be passed without commentary, viz., that which was created by piratical booksellers and publishers, trading on the dramatist's popularity and fair fame, and publishing, even during his life, various dramas as his, either impudently as by William Shakspeare, or sinistrously, as by W. Sh. or W. S. Thus, "The Yorkshire Tragedy" was printed with the poet's name in full on the title page in 1608, as was the "London Prodigal" in 1605, and the "Passionate Pilgrim" in 1600. "Sir John Oldcastle" was also issued in 1600 with the poet's name in full. "Lochrine" was printed as newly set forth, overseen, and corrected by W. S., as early as 1594. "The Life and Death of Thos., Lord Cromwell, as by W. S., in 1602 and 1613." The first and second part of the "Troublesome Reign of John," by W. Sh., 1611. "The Puritan," by W. S., 1607; and, in addition to these plays, falsely attributed to the poet with intent to deceive, and which led to the incorporation of some of them into the folio edition of 1664, viz., the five above enumerated:—"Oldcastle," "Cromwell," "The Puritan Widow," "Yorkshire Tragedy," and "London Prodigal," as well as "Lochrine" and "Pericles."

These trade frauds were not circumscribed by the author's life. "The Two Noble Kinsmen" was falsely printed in 1634, as by Shakespeare and Fletcher; and "The Birth of Merlin," in 1662, as by the same authors; and among other plays, with similar deceit assigned, were "Mucedorus;" "Edward III," 1760, by Capel; "George A. Green;" "The Pinner of Wakefield;" "The Arraignment of Paris," by Peele, 1594; "The Double Falsehood," by Theobald, 1728; and "The Merry Devil

of Edmonton," by Kirkham and Winstanley. Curiously, this last play, assigned first to Kirkham, 1631, was proclaimed by the German critics, notably Tieck and Horn, as among the finest of the poet's works. "Pericles" has of late years been accepted as in part written by the poet, and this was Lord Tennyson's view; and the same favourable assignment might be adopted with reference to "Edward III," not yet, however, incorporated in his works, which undoubtedly displays passages that no one else could have written. If the young dramatist was, as Greene averred, the hack author of Strange's Company before 1592, he might well have worked on this tragedy. So great an authority as Coleridge gave colour to the suggestion that "The Two Noble Kinsmen" was a composite play by originally suggesting that he could scarcely retain a doubt as to the first act having been written by Shakspeare, and Mr. Dyce most plausibly and reasonably suggested that it was an imperfect play, or draft of a play, by the poet, and most possibly it is the same drama under another name, as "Palamon and Arcite," which Shakspeare's company had in their possession, and enacted on the 17th September, 1594, and that it was subsequently reproduced and worked on by Fletcher.

To me, Nash's preface to *Menaphon*, of the date of August, 1589, completely answers the baseless suggestion that Shakspeare commenced dramatic writing in 1591 or 1592. It is directed against Marlowe, and some supposed pupil or imitator who wrote blank verse. The attack on Marlowe, instigated by Green, the author of the pamphlet, is in the highest degree vindictive, personal and abusive. Nash assails his (Marlowe's) ally as "a mechanical mate," "a home born mediocrity," a trivial translator "who had intermeddled with Italian translations," and who could afford you, aided by Seneca in English, whole Hamlets

of tragical speeches, who, from such knowledge as we possess of the authors then writing, could only have been Shakspere. He was the "provincial man." "The Noverint, the imitator of Kyd," who had intermeddled with Italian translations in "Love's Labour Lost," and "The Two Gentlemen of Verona," and who certainly in these early plays displayed a very annoying familiarity with legal phraseology. Why the Danish name Amleth was altered to Hamlet, save to gratify the Stratford poet, whose only son was named Hamlet, or Hamnet, which were then interchangeable, would need explanation. The fact that both authors were writing for the same company, that they had deposed Greene, and that Tamburlaine, in 1587-8, had captured the town, explains the whole jealousy and acrimoniousness of the attack. With some experience in unravelling cryptic utterances in writing, I can only present this as a definite conclusion. Let others who can produce evidence to sustain their views offer some other solution.

On these various points reviewed, what can I say, or reply, to this vast and ever-increasing monument of malevolence, incompetent ignorance, and human depravity, but fall back on the sorrowful reflection of the prophet that "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Whose heart, I leave to your charitable inferences. Personally, I can only say that while the poet ever rises greater and grander in our study and contemplation, his commentators, biographers, and editors, proportionately shrink and dwindle and dwarf themselves into mischievous and malignant pigmies by their manifest ignorance and incapacity, as well as their meanness of suggestion. Not that I include all in this general or indiscriminate condemnation. Mr. Payne Collier's forgeries were framed in no evil spirit. They were

intended only to minister to his own personal vanity and, indirectly, his pecuniary advantage. He never attempted to vilify or degrade the poet. He only wished to prove his exclusive knowledge of incidents in the poet's life that no other investigator or student had discovered. To this end he tampered with, falsified, and forged various public documents in the State Paper Office, in the archives of Bridgewater House, and the Alwyn MSS., at Dulwich; and thus, by one sad deflection from duty—extending, it must be said, over many years and on many occasions, but all to the same end—made wreck of a very noble and studious life. It is one of the saddest stories on record. He was himself a tireless and most discriminating Shaksperian student, a gentleman well descended, and, as it was believed, and as all sound evidence suggested on every other point, of conduct of unimpeachable integrity. But the results of his forgeries were, unfortunately, incorporated into history. On the strength of his reputation they were adopted into, and absorbed by, all the nominal biographies and chronicles of the poet and his time, issued between 1830 and 1880. They are still received and republished as fact by authors unaware of the deceit, and thus, nearly all the accepted wells of information have been poisoned. The mischief involved being, that all kinds of unfounded hypotheses, theories, conclusions and deductions are made, as upon assumed fact, to the complete perversion of authentic history.

The frauds perpetrated in good faith by unconscious vanity and by constructive biographers have been, if less culpable, even more mischievous. Each commentator has read, in his own particular view or impression of the poet's life, which has generally been scandalous and depreciatory, as if it were true. Or he has to establish some imaginary

preconceived, but illusory theory, furnished wholly with fictional details. Dr. George Brandes discovered nothing but aristocratic tendencies in "Coriolanus." Whereas in this play all the common sense is assigned to the plebeians. The hero is a convicted rogue and fool, and one of the foolishhest and most insolent autocrats ever known. Malone—with the vanity on him of superior instinct—suggested that he, out of the three parts of "Henry the Sixth," was able to discern exactly how little Shakspeare wrote of these plays. He alleged that out of 6,043 lines, 1,771 were by some author other than Shakspeare; 2,373 were framed by him on the foundation of some other dramatist; and 1,899 were entirely his own. In other words, that less than one-third of the play was the poet's. It was pure apocrypha, and, of course, nonsensical, but Mr. Emerson believed it. He also saw the tail wag, and at once believed he could perform a similar feat with "Henry the Eighth," also discredited by Malone. He revealed that Shakspeare had only worked on some one else's play; that this adopted history was "written by a *superior thoughtful man* with a vicious ear." How much superior to the national bard, and who he was, remain a secret. But the essayist said, "I can mark his lines and know well their cadence," and he assigns, *mirabile dictu*, Wolsey's soliloquy and the following beautiful scene with Cromwell to the superior man. Fired by this averment, the Rev. Frederick G. Fleay necessarily improved on it. He doesn't condescend to introduce us to the "superior thoughtful man," but, disagreeing with Mr. Emerson, thinks it was not a prior, but a subsequent author, and guesses it was Fletcher. I might, with equal accuracy, guess it as Adam Smith. This is but one of the instances of overweening vanity to which I have referred, which forms so

substantial part of what is known as constructive biography.

Finally, and in truth, I must confess my belief that Shakspeare is his best, his only, expositor; that his writings are unintentionally autobiographic. That in holding the mirror up to nature and designing to conceal himself, he really discloses all of his life that it is necessary to know. If he, like most of us, led a dual existence—the life we aspire to and the life we conform to—his sordid side must have been but a reflex of his nobler self. In all his mature works, the poet's spirit of profound devotion, his deep-hearted moral fervour, his piety, self-effacement, his exalted view of feminine perfection, his reverence for mercy and justice, his self-denial and pity, must have framed and moulded his actual life. No man can conceal himself behind his masque. In spite of themselves the old Hebrew psalmists and poets stand revealed. Their poems reveal their desire of triumph and victory over their enemies, their love of power, their selfishness, suspicion and greed, indeed, all the vices they most desired to conceal from their Creator are manifested and exploited, and this unconscious factor is present in all the poet's works. The writing is the man, in his catholicity, his gentleness, candour, and truth. He expressed his views on ethics, on duty, the governing motives of his conduct, the impulses of his mind, fully in his various plays. He disclosed to us "the soul of goodness in things evil would men observingly distil it out;" the checks that warn us on all hands never "to outdo discretion;" the fatal disparity between pursuit and possession; the ecstasy of valour in the rhapsody of pure patriotism, as in the words of the dying John o' Gaunt; and on all sides the philosophy of tolerance and resignation. These, it may be, were the unintentional truisms of his reflections,

transfused into the life of his noblest characters, but they were also unconsciously the expressions and utterances of his own humanity.

What deductions and conclusions, then, disregarding all apocrypha, must we frame and assign to the poet as his true biography, apart from the meagre incidents of his life as revealed to us by the few and unimportant facts which the ravages of time and the senselessness of man have alone bequeathed us. That the poet was a most staunch friend, a devoted father, a passionate lover, an unequivocal patriot, a filial son; that he was also a calm, unambitious, even-minded, practical man of the world, cautious, undemonstrative, with a strange tinge of melancholy (reflected in his own Antonio) and disparagement in his composition; modest beyond precedent or belief, but genial, hospitable, and tenderhearted.

That on the whole, to adopt Thomas Carlyle's phrase, it was a beautiful life; a life of fervent sincerity, a life of vast unconsciousness; of no ignoble repinings upon his poverty and mean estate. As contrasted with his superhuman attributes and attainments, they did not divert or warp his soul, for he retained, amid all trials, the full wisdom of its genial and comprehensive humanity, and the full measure of a life which Trench described as "so gentle, so tender, so just, so true."

THE PROVINCE OF POETRY.

BY REV. E. A. WESLEY, M.A.

IN an aisle of Hereford Cathedral is still to be seen the *Mappa Mundi* of Richard de Bello, a churchman, who delineated for the instruction of his townspeople the world as it appeared to him, a canon of the cathedral, in the year of grace 1300. The centre of the map is occupied by Jerusalem, while other cities and towns extend from that centre to the untravelled ocean, depicted on the margin, which our forefathers thought encompassed the habitable world. It was thus that Richard de Bello expressed the idea conveyed in the Monkish line, *stat crux, dum volvitur orbis*. Where the cross had stood was the world's heart. We could wish he had drawn for us on the other side of this faded parchment a *mappa vitæ*, showing man in the centre, instead of Jerusalem, and those departments of human knowledge which display man's connection with his environment, arranged as countries and towns, more or less remote as they recede in relative importance.

You can imagine if he had projected such a chart, that the arts and sciences which constituted polite learning in his days, and marked off civilized man from the barbarian, that group of studies and occupations I mean that we call humanities, would occupy the inner circle, while sciences apparently less vital to mankind would engird these in ever widening rings, until the limits of human knowledge were reached, and the sea of mystery that still encompasses the far-reaching mind of man. The first zone in such a projection would certainly have displayed Theology

as a golden belt around the soul. Then ethics, logic, grammar, rhetoric, and literature; after them, history and biography; and further away, but still grouped in the region of distinctively human sciences, astrology, like all the others, ministering to man and telling him how even the most distant stars "fixed in the orb that flies" by their mysterious movements, condescend to regulate his little life; alchemy, with its quest of the *elixir vitæ* and the philosopher's stone; and mechanics, striving for that ever elusive and receding mirage a perpetual motion, whereby man, the centre of the universe, might subject all nature to himself, and live as people six hundred years ago wanted to live, and as some do still, without work, like happy lotus eaters.

In such a mediæval map of life it would not be a hard task to find some little garden corner assigned to poetry; in fact, no scheme in which the humanities were spread like a fine old timbered park around the ancestral mansion of the soul, would be complete without an Italian garden of formal verse, and a wild English wilderness of tangled drama and ballad. Let us fancy, however, that we have skipped six hundred years of English history, and that we request some canon of science to draw up for us his twentieth century map of life. I suppose he would object, as a preliminary difficulty, the accurate determination of Jerusalem. The assumption that sciences should all be ranked about man's personality, he might say, gives man a prominence in the scheme of the universe which his late appearance on the surface of the earth, and his comparative insignificance, does not justify. Suppose, however, this objection overcome by the consideration that however absurd, philosophically, it may be for him to take up this egoistic attitude toward his environment, yet for practical purposes the universe does appear to surround

the observer, and that each man is his own Jerusalem. Yet I suppose our philosopher might still object that a map projected on such a scheme would possess no scientific value, being based merely on the personal view and prejudices of an individual. But it is precisely this personal view that we want to get at. We want to know where in the particular scheme of life, which our canon of science has already drawn for his own guidance, the province of poetry lies.

Thus cornered, let us suppose he sketches for us a map, with himself in the centre. Mathematics he will probably plot out in a zone immediately around himself, then the natural and physical sciences in a wider ring, beyond which again he will project, we may suppose, the more speculative sciences, like ethics and psychology, while in a region still more remote, he will hesitatingly indicate the possible whereabouts of literature, ancient and modern. This plan, you will observe, roughly reverses the order of the canon of Hereford, placing those sciences near the centre that appear the more exact, and those that are infused by imaginative and emotional elements, and are, therefore, less exact, proportionately further away. This is an interesting change, but let us pursue the illustration another stage, for there is a class of mind whose map it would be equally instructive to possess. I mean the map of life of a self-made business man. His conception you will suppose will be frankly egoistic. He will arrange around his centre the art of making money, which to him is the only matter of vital importance. Encircling the rules and occupations of business he will place, I think, the arts and sciences which directly promote commerce: modern languages, estimated at their business rather than their literary value, and the natural sciences which can be enlisted in the service of money-making. Outside these

important subjects he may set out his own personal pleasures and sports, his hobbies and predilections, and, beyond these, other peoples' hobbies, such as astronomy, and the reading of what he would call poetry books.

Now the self-made commercial man is not *per se* incapable of finding an out of the way corner in his mind for poetry, but what he cannot do is to plot it out in any region lying on the same plane with what he regards as the more material and serious affairs of life. In the view of such literature, music and art seemed poised in a fourth dimension, out of reach of common every day experience. The methods of poetry in particular appear capricious, its view of life detached and unpractical, a something he cannot lay hold of in the same way as other things. He was not born that way, and poets he reminds you are born, not made. The same element of unreality, or other worldliness, requiring a special birth gift, he observes in music and painting. It is obvious to his mind, as to everyone, that only the *technique* of art can be taught, the rest being inward gift, and what cannot be acquired by education by such people as himself seems scarcely worth wishing for.

But before we go further, you may think perhaps the time has come when we should find a definition of Poetry. I am not so rash as to attempt that: it is like defining life, a thing no one has yet succeeded in doing, for every definition leaves out some element which we know is part of its essence. When we attempt to supply the deficiency we spoil the poise of the definition. What we introduce itself requires balancing, and if we essay the task of remedying one fault by a supplemental description, we quickly lose ourselves in a maze, for every addition introduces some new error. It is scarcely necessary to point out the difference between poetry and poems; that

some poems are poetry, and others not; that poetry is a term, vaguely employed, sometimes merely of a particular metrical form of expression, at others of a spirit operating in a very wide sphere, and coming into contact broadly with literature and art. Poetry, in this latter sense, is a hovering spirit that floats in and out of life, animating dead thoughts, and making them look us in the eyes and answer us. Poetry thus regarded is indeed the very soul of art, its vivifying element, without which its form is cold and academic. To go a little deeper, poetry represents a highly complex mental state, arising out of an intricate mesh of sensations, too entangled, too evanescent, variable, subtle, and dream-like for comprehension under any formal descriptive phrase.

Yet the spirit of poetry is not on this account unreal, nor does it belong to any fourth dimension outside the every day ways of the world. Logically, its methods, for it has methods, are the same as those of science, analytic and synthetic. Its view of nature is equally veracious. The one *bête noir* of science is the personal equation, the disturbing element of the observer's individuality to which others may or may not be liable. For the scientific man's desire is to examine nature in her own essence, not in her relation to himself. The poet, on the contrary, stakes all on the personal equation. Eliminate that and you take Hamlet out of his play. He does not trouble about nature's essence, but nature's relation to himself. His method of approaching her is therefore different, equally analytical and synthetical, but still different.

For his analysis and synthesis are directed to the relations which exist between himself and the world, and not to those existing between the different phenomena of the world regarded objectively. His view is consequently at once looser and broader; and if he should focus his eye,

as the scientific man is constantly doing, upon some minute detail, it is because the detail calls up in his mind a crowd of thoughts more or less casually, or causally associated with it. He enters upon his task equipped, not encumbered, by his own individuality. The voices of nature sound to him as echoes of his own voice. If he is sad, nature harmonises with his mood; if he is gay, she rejoices with him, and then

His heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

He takes nature into his confidence, and talks to her as if she possessed an intelligent and responsive soul. Approached thus, nature explains to him his own feelings. How otherwise can you account for the beautiful confidences between the lover in *Maud*, and the garden flowers "that watch and wait" with him for the coming of his love?

I said to the rose, the brief night goes
In babble and revel and wine.
O young lord-lover, what sighs are those,
For one that will never be thine?
But mine, but mine, so I sware to the rose,
"For ever and ever mine."

The slender accacia would not shake
One long milk-bloom on the tree:
The white lake-blossom fell into the lake
As the pimpernel dozed on the lea.
But the rose was awake all night for your sake.
Knowing your promise to me;
The lilies and roses were all awake,
They sighed for the dawn and for thee.

You will perceive from a passage like this, and many more that will occur to you, how needful the subjective element or personal equation is to a poet. But you notice also how true he must be to matters of fact. And that his

observation of nature is quite as precise as that of the man of science. The motionless accacia, in the still summer air, suggests to him sleep; the open blooms of the rose and the lily, which do not close at nightfall, seem to be keeping vigil with him in the darkness. Perhaps you think this is fanciful, but men actually feel like that under such circumstances, and the fact is as true in human nature as the conversion of oxygen and hydrogen into water under the action of an electric spark.

Man is placed in a mysterious world, a mystery to himself and his fellows. Imagine a room hung round with ancient figured tapestries, on which strange lights and shadows fall from a richly painted window; such is the world in which we move. Fancy you see, or think you see, the arras move, as if some person stealthily crept along between it and the wall, a movement you can only just discern, yet of which you are quite sure. Now the poet sees in the nature that environs him a movement indicative of a hidden presence, which may be human or not, he cannot tell, but a something that stirs the tapestry; and the poet may call that veiled presence "death," "life," "change," "God." But the scientific man does not trouble himself about such evanescent phenomena. He has nothing to do with first or final causes. It is the stitches in the tapestry that interest him. They are the only facts of which he is certain, and if he finds how the threads are drawn, and what pattern they make, he considers that he has added to the sum of human knowledge. Death, to him, is merely the cessation of life, a pure negation; but to a poet, like Roden Noel, it is a mystic shrouded form, seen behind nature, seen everywhere, personal, terrible, yet tender, and the poet has humanity on his side. That is what death really is.

Again, change is to the man of science either the absence of stability, or a mode of matter; to the poet it is a haunting presence, moving behind everything he sees, all he remembers, all he can imagine or think. And humanity is with him there, too. Which is right? I venture to suggest that truth lies more probably with the many than with the few. I am not asking you to do violence to your scientific instincts. Death and change, operating in the world upon visible things, are what science tells us they are; but to us men and women they are that and vastly more. Both views are right. Science regards nature as she is in herself, finding nothing in death and change but the passing away of things that are. Poetry, viewing her in relation to a many-sided self, sees in death a mystery, impenetrable, a veiled Isis; and in change, a figure moving behind the pictured scenes in the arras, an eavesdropping Polonius, a rat, but a rat that will nibble away the world. That which we call impersonation in poetry is frequently not a bald poetical figure, a rhetorical sham, but a natural and legitimate ascription of a common cause to a vast variety of allied effects. Now, scientific definitions and explanations are only valid in the world for which they are framed. Transposed from the region of the non-self to the region of self and humanity, which is its multiple, they are no longer true. But this does not alter the truth and value of definitions in their own proper sphere, nor will this seem unnatural when we consider that mental phenomena are as real as physical, that a fact of mind is as much a fact as the ascertained velocity of light, or the action of chlorophyll in a leaf upon the atmosphere. If I press this obvious truth, it is that we may dispossess our minds of the notion that literary men, and poets in particular, deal in merely fancy commodities, like pedlars, who carry toys and trifles for

idle folk. I am anxious that the poet should not appear to any one as a dreamer, walking in a vain shadow, and disquieting himself in vain. To this matter, however, we shall have to return when we deal with the poets' contribution to language.

So far we have regarded the worlds of self and non-self as regions absolutely apart, but in the personality of man the two are blended. And here again the view of the poet and the man of science are opposed. The scientific man examines the mind in the same way that he examines other phenomena, as an objective entity to be considered by itself. Treating the mind thus, as a result of the action of sense impression on a sensitive organism, he eliminates the unconditional element and reduces the *ego* to a tangible, limited, and measureable object. In doing this he not only assumes that the *ego* can be resolved into sensuous impressions, but that these sensuous impressions are an absolutely complete record of all that is, was, and can be in the environment. Heraclitus in the ancient world, and men of science in the new, tell us that matter is nowhere static. Discoverers of recent date tell us that the movements of matter are rhythmic, and that the rhythmic waves vary greatly in length from the extremely rapid vibrations, which in the spectrum are called chemical rays, to the extremely slow of wireless telegraphy.

A perfect system of sensation would convey to the mind impressions corresponding with all these waves, but our gamut of sensation is at once limited and defective; limited at both ends, and defective in the middle. It is as if the keyboard of sensation would only speak in certain octaves—those of light, sound, heat, taste, and smell. We know that the upper octave of this keyboard, the octave of chemical rays, is dumb to us, for we have not senses that

can respond to its keys, as are those of the lower octave which yields the waves we call Marconigrams; and within these extremes there are silent spaces of dumb octaves for which we have no corresponding sense, for our perception of heat does not begin where our sensation of light ends, but somewhere lower down.

In spite of the imperfection of our senses, science bids us believe that all sensation is mere sensibility to waves of different lengths, and you are assured that this explanation covers everything. But this explanation does not cover everything. To the sensitive *ego*, sensations are not mere records of wave lengths, for if they were, we could feel heat as a dark shade, say, of purple, whereas, in fact, we regard it as something totally different. Did you ever ask why sound does not reach us as a sort of brown or blue? Or why, again, one sense of wide capacity does not cover the whole gamut of sensation? Why, above all, do these senses of ours persuade us that each octave in the gamut of vibration is as distinct from the next as though it belonged to a different dimension, like space and time? These are serious difficulties. The separate evolution in the organism of the sense organs presents another serious difficulty. Again, the fact that one sense does not fade into another, but that there are those silent octaves in the keyboard, or dark bands in the spectrum of sensation, and that these gulfs separating sense from sense, are not only unbridged, but are so far separated in nature that we cannot even conceive of any possible connection between them—what serious *lacunæ* in the system do these anomalies present! But when you draw all these difficulties to a head, and ask yourself whether, in the face of these convergent proofs, drawn from personal experience, compelling you to disbelieve what science by experiment compels you to believe, you realise how far you are at

present from a philosophy which can harmonise the subjective with the objective, the outer world of matter with the inner world of mind. You may take up which position you like—the poet's, based on experience, or the natural philosopher's, based on experiment. Both may be right, both may be wrong, neither can be wholly right or wrong. There is a missing link, no doubt, which some day may be discovered; but until this is done, the scientific man, in his zeal for defending the province of science, has no right to deny a province to poetry, nor to assert that his own view of the world, and of the mind, is the only view which can be honestly held by sincere seekers after truth.

Now, from these fundamentally different views of nature, those of the man of science and of the poet, it follows as a necessary consequence that there must be different uses of language. Scientific words are like coins of the realm, each bearing its value clearly written on its face. The words of poetry, on the other hand, are counters, which may represent more or less according to some agreed convention, or the personal predilection of the user.

There is, therefore, an elasticity about poetic words which distinguishes them from the rigidity of scientific diction. The poet's has reference to men's thoughts about things, and as their thoughts depend on the report of their senses, and as these senses are not alike in any two individuals, the words which represent these thoughts must be accommodated to the average level of experience. One man, as we say, is all ear, another all eye. One is keenly sensitive to every sense, another, in some directions dull and half awakened. The words which are used as marks by men so different must be adjusted to a common standard. You see a thing, and give it a name, and the word you use means to you what you have seen,

and nothing more. If yours is the searching eye, the denotation of your word, which is your thing-mark, covers a larger number of attributes than if your eye is dull. But words are not mere thing-marks, they are memorials also; they represent not only things, but thoughts about things, and memories of those thoughts. The memory, we must remember, is not a mere storehouse, it is a factory. Our senses bring it the raw material which it works up into forms of its own. It is a living organism. The thoughts we deposit in it are constantly, silently, and unconsciously undergoing a change "into something rare and strange." You have seen a primrose somewhere long ago, in some beautiful wood where, in the enchanted days of childhood, you once wandered, and every primrose that you see, even in the little faded nosegay offered by a poor girl in the street, awakes in your mind the thoughts of that first primrose. This is due to the association of ideas, and it affects the richest and noblest, as well as the homeliest words in a poet's vocabulary. The cluster of associations forms the connotation of a word, for words are like plants which we take up out of our hearts with the soil clinging to them. These are the poet's counters which he uses in the game of verse building. Their selection is due to the poet's individual genius, their arrangement to his experience and training as an artist. In general conversation the denotation of the terms we employ is of more consequence than the connotation, but in poetry they are of equal consequence. And the same is true of sentences as well as words, for there are forms of speech that are associated in the mind with special ideas, and the poet has to keep this in mind, because he is not dealing with a subject merely as a subject, but with its effect on the complex nature of his reader. The use of the connotative method was so greatly extended and developed by the

romantic poets at the beginning of the nineteenth century that it is now regarded as the principal mark of the school. To appreciate a poet who employs the connotative or romantic method, we must possess in ourselves, at least in measure, the poet's insight and training. Our life must be on the same plane with his.

A poet's habitual attitude towards the world about him is, in a sense, detached. He sees the pageant pass by, and views it in relation to other and higher things, like the angel host of Gabriel that Milton says—

About him exercised heroic games,
But o'er their heads celestial armoury, shields, helm, and spear.
Hung bright with diamonds flaming, and with gold.

Great thoughts, eternity, life, death, space, time, and change, like this celestial armoury, hang over the common exercises of life. The poet views the travelling panorama that unwinds before him as men do trees, houses, bridges, and fields, seen through the window of a moving railway train, trailing slowly across a stationary background of far grey hills. Our great poets are always looking away to far horizons, or upwards to the sun and stars.

There is yet another element in the method of a poet that distinguishes his style from that of every day conversation. The musical rhythm of his verse, the cadence, the dying fall, that "comes o'er our spirit like the breath of the South;" the music that bestows on verse that pungent aroma, that sea whiff that clings to our hearts like sea brine to the hair.

The music of poetry, like the music of song, demands both time and tune; time measured by that rhythmical beat of the pulse which is the common mark of poetry, and tune the product of a melodious succession of beautiful sounds. There have been schools of poetry in which,

as in the Hebrew Psalms, both time and tune adapted themselves rather to the mental than the outward ear; and in our own literature we are not completely strangers to this irregular structure of verse. The so-called poems of Ossian, and the strenuous verse of Walt Whitman illustrate this hermaphrodite prose. Less distinctively poetic in structure, and still nearer approaching prose, are those impassioned passages which are usually regarded as the crowning gems of oratory in such writers as Edmund Burke. For the declamatory and the singing voice are nearly allied, and forms turns, images, and even a half-suppressed rhythm, borrowed from poetry, are not out of place in the impassioned rhetoric that appeals to the imagination and the heart.

To discriminate between the style proper for the one and the other requires a good ear and a cultivated judgment; but to discern the subtler differences which differentiate good from bad poetry, requires a portion of the poet's spirit. Much that parades in the apparel of verse, when stripped of meretricious ornament, proves merely bastard rhetoric, poor alike in quality and substance, while true and noble poetry often walks in homely attire. No touchstone has yet been discovered by which even a poet may infallibly distinguish the false from the true. Good and bad in poetry shade into one another by imperceptible degrees.

It is for this reason that we cannot define poetry, for definition means the setting of limits, and we cannot confine a spirit that blows like the winds where it lists. We may, it is true, set boundary stones to mark the frontiers of prose and verse, but we cannot thus delimitate the empire of the generative spirit or soul of poetry. Viewed thus, the limits are conterminous only with the boundaries of the emotions and the imagination. It is,

therefore, not merely in a figurative way that we speak of the poetry of art, since painting, sculpture, architecture, and even natural scenery, when they deeply stir these two faculties, are rightly styled poetic. And in this way fiction, history, biography, and other branches of literature and science, may be poetically treated. To use the language of the politician, we may say the proper sphere of poetry is verse, but the zone of her influence extends to those adjacent provinces that lie between the parallels of the imagination and the emotions.

There was a time when religion owned a more intimate association with poetry than she does now, for the growth of creeds and the crystallization of faith which has been going on from the age of the schoolmen until the present time, has gradually shifted religious belief from the land of great ideas and the world of wonder to the scientific region of strictly defined dogma. This fact probably explains the absence from English literature of good religious poetry. Our national poetry is reverent rather than religious. Caedmon wrote pious poetry as naturally and spontaneously as a bird sings, for he knew little about dogma; Gower stiffly, because his creed fettered him; while Milton, our greatest religious poet, is greatest where least dogmatic, and charms us most where he is most human.

It is interesting to observe this old affinity of religion and poetry reappears when theology, as a formal system, drops away. For religion is scientific only while she addresses the reason, but when she reverts to her old self, and speaks to the imagination and the heart, her form and her language are those of poetry. As of religion, so of philosophy, the more it draws water from the inexhaustible springs of the imagination, the more it imbibes the poetic spirit. Nor is philosophy ever more pregnant, more

formative, or more progressive than when it approaches poetry. Sophocles, Æschylus, and Shakespeare are more profound philosophers than Aristotle, Hobbes, or Descartes, because they are more human, and a philosophy that co-ordinates the whole universe, yet leaves out man, is essentially narrower than one which regards the world through the personal equation.

And this consideration naturally leads us to observe that the arts, and here we are regarding poetry as an art, are not progressive in the same way and to the same extent as are the sciences. Sculptors, painters, musicians, architects, and other artists, although dependent for training, for example, and, to some degree, for material on those who have gone before, are still more dependent for success on their own individual genius. And we know that all the training in the world, and the best of implements, will not make artists out of merely clever and painstaking students. The eye, the ear, the mind may be improved by education, but it is only the innate gift that can inspire their use.

Science, on the contrary, is far more dependent on the materials and discoveries of previous workers, and is therefore far more progressive than art. The fame of a scientific man rests less upon his actual contributions to the literature of science than on the influence which his discoveries have upon the men that follow him and continue his work. Sciences help one another; arts do not. Every man of science begins where his predecessor laid down his trowel, and endeavours to carry out and perfect his work, and, in turn, his labours are absorbed by those that follow. But every artist lives for himself, and his value rests on his own intrinsic merit. He may, it is true, found a school, but his personal merits as an artist, not as a leader, are what he will be judged by in after years.

Milton founded no school, yet his reputation is as great as if he had. Sometimes people talk of dead languages; no language is really dead which contains the artistic creations of a great age, of a great people, or even of a solitary writer whose work the world values.

Only in the earliest stages were the arts really progressive. With maturity they ceased to advance. Sculpture has not progressed since Phidias, nor painting since Raphael. Yet for all this the arts are not stationary. Their law is change, not advance, because the eye, the ear, and hand do not become more sensitive with the lapse of ages, and these natural faculties are the stock-in-trade of the artist. With science it is not so. Every fresh discovery leads to the greater perfection of the senses, for it leads to the adaptation of instruments of increasing precision for the extension of the senses. Thus the microscope, the telescope, and a score of other instruments have extended the organ of vision, while apparatus has been invented which can record sounds inaudible to the ordinary ear, and the crude sense of touch has been practically dispensed with through the marvellous instruments for weighing and measuring which have superseded them.

It is therefore no disparagement of poetry, regarded as a branch of literature, to admit its non-progressive character. It is not its business to carry us on restlessly from conquest to conquest, but to keep in touch with those realities that lie beyond the reach of science, and outside the plane in which the instruments of science can be used. And its function is to develop those qualities of the mind and heart which grasp after things unseen and spiritual. We live in a materialistic age, when such qualities are but little cultivated, and but little valued. Science and commerce have made such vast inroads on our time, and have claimed such an inordinate amount of attention, that the

human mind itself is in imminent danger of becoming materialised. The result is that life has definitely sunk from a high level to a mean level. Spiritual forces are at a discount. Men's interests and amusements year by year become more material, more physical, less refined, less aspiring. We are even in danger of a moral relapse into a species of highly refined and civilised barbarism. And all this culminates in dilution of the zest of life. We feel less, dare less, are less venturesome, less romantic, than our great grandparents. The tide of joy has ebbed, leaving the mud flats exposed. It is only now amongst the very young, as yet unspoiled by the calculating, over-prudent spirit of the age, that you can hear real honest laughter, or recognise the nervous thrill and ecstasy of life. But this thought has been so admirably expressed by Coventry Patmore, that I cannot avoid taking up your time with a quotation :

An idle poet here and there
Looks round him : but for all the rest
The world, unfathomably fair,
Is duller than a witling's jest.
Love wakes men once a lifetime each :
They lift their heavy lids and look :
And, lo, what one sweet page may teach
They read with joy, then shut the book.
And some give thanks, and some blaspheme,
And most forget : but either way
That, and the child's unheeded dream
Is all the light of all their day.

To bring back light, and joy, and love, into the everyday life of the toiling, fretful, wayworn lives of men, is no mean task, and if the study of poetry can, even in small measure, contribute to this result, we are justified in assigning it a place near the centre of the map of life.

But there are other and deeper reasons for desiring to

accord it a far more prominent position than has been granted of late: for poetry is not an art only, but an inspiration of the human spirit, a form, that is, of thinking, and a method by which the soul seeks certain classes of truth that cannot effectually be reached by other methods. Regarded thus, poetry takes rank with religion, and philosophy, not perhaps on the same level, but in kind, for if religion and philosophy represent certain departments of mental activity whose business it is to discover truths not demonstrable by purely scientific methods, poetry shares this aim, and is, therefore, in kind, not dissimilar.

Yet there is a great and fundamental difference also. Philosophy, natural and mental, deals with the general principles of knowledge regarding both matter and mind as they are in themselves, not as they appear, and so far as it is positive, it excludes from consideration the problems that cluster around first or final causes. Theology, which is the philosophical statement of religious principles on the other hand, is primarily concerned with the first or creative cause, and the final cause or end of creation. It thus deals with the relation of man to God, with man's purpose in life, and the means whereby he may best attain it. Philosophy, in brief, treats of things as they are in themselves; theology of things in relation to their beginning and end.

Now we have seen already that poetry is concerned with what we called the personal equation, it therefore lies in a region between philosophy and theology. Unlike them it has no direct dealing with things or principles, whether those things or principles be external or internal; but with those things, and those principles in relation to a third thing, a sensitive ego. Its field of activity is obviously very wide, including all the social relations of man, all aspects of nature, all views of the relationship

between man and his Maker, or man and his end, that are purely relative. Whenever it transgresses these limits, and adopts dogmatic positions and absolute statements such as are proper to philosophy and theology, poetry fails. Thus Fletcher's *Purple Island*, which treats of anatomy, regarded as a poem is a lamentable failure, only rising from mere dogmatism in those passages in which the general scientific and philosophic aim is laid aside for picturesque narrative.

In the same way, the attempt of Erasmus Darwin to describe vegetable propagation in the *Botanic Garden* turned out disastrously. For not only is the poet in that particular instance himself an indifferent artist, but the reader feels from the outset that the subject likewise is utterly unsuited to poetic treatment. In the same way the pure theology of Young's *Night Thoughts* is excessively tedious, not merely from the defective capabilities of the poet, but from the manifest unsuitability of the theme. Even the divine Milton, when he dives into theology, fails to retain our interest, although his verse, always so fine, would redeem almost anything. In all these cases where the human view is forgotten and the personality of the poet suppressed, the composition ceases to be good poetry, and where the personal equation protrudes, sciences, philosophy and theology, come to the ground. When poets, therefore, wish to impart their views on philosophical or theological subjects, they must treat them poetically, that is, not absolutely, not as things viewed in themselves, but as they appear.

It is on this account that Lord Bacon says, with a slight note of disparagement, poets deal in shows. They do, for their business is not to reflect, but interpret nature, or, as we have said, to view it in relation to their own personality. The mind of the poet resembles those mirrors

of oriental manufacture which, viewed at a certain angle, reveal a pattern curiously wrought into the substance of the metal that cannot be seen in any other position. The imagination of the poet at once reflects and combines. We all do this to a limited extent, but the poet without any stint whatever. No observation enters through his gate of sensation but at once undergoes a transformation—that which is simple becoming complex, and that which is complex becoming simple. He is able to project his own personality into nature, so that nature, even when inanimate, appears personal. His reading of humanity is at once faithful and interpretive from the same reason. In a flash, in a moment, he sees and reveals the hidden springs of motive, and the harmony that subsists beneath personal contradictions. Thus the poets, and especially the dramatists, have contributed to the knowledge of history and of our fellow men. The poet deals in shows, but his shows are often nearer reality than other men's acutest observations. For observations that ignore the relation of man to nature can never include more than partial truths.

We should remember, too, that we think in words, and that it is the poets who, above all others, have enriched our vocabulary. Those who endow words with fresh connotations enrich thoughts of which words are the symbols. An instance will make this clear; from *Richardson's Dictionary* I take the word "death," which is followed by an explanation, "to fail," "to dissolve." Philosophically, death is a negative, the bare cessation of living. Read, now, Lady Dufferin's familiar song, "I'm sitting on the stile, Mary," and observe how the thought of death is enriched by domestic and pathetic associations. Then carry on the idea thus enlarged into Mr. Browning's "Bishop ordering his tomb in St. Praxid's church," and then take up that magnificent poem of Mr. Swinburne's,

surely one of the finest in the English language, entitled "By the North Sea," and note how the elemental word grows under the masters' hands and strikes roots deep down into the unknown. It is thus that the poets carry great thoughts from the sphere of commonplace into the deep regions of thought, redeeming them from paltry and mean associations, and restoring them to their ancient dignity and state.

The early liturgies of the Christian church bid us *sursum corda* "upwards the heart." *Sursum corda* is the bidding of the poet. It is his business to cry aloud in the wilderness of triviality and low aims, debasing pleasures, narrow creeds, and the slothfulness that will not think, and cannot learn,—“Lift up your hearts.” We want that uplifting now, if ever; and only those who can answer “we lift them up unto the Lord,” we lift them up to whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, only such as these can realise the splendid mission of poetry.

Do not let us then ascribe to her a home in the arctic circle, for her natural home and province is the warm, beating human heart.

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THE POETICAL WORKS OF
ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE
CRITICALLY CONSIDERED.

BY REV. E. A. WESLEY, M.A.

OF the three great poets of the Victorian age, Tennyson, early in life secured a safe place in the hearts of the people; Browning after many days; Swinburne never. Nor is the reason for this diversity of fate far to seek. Tennyson was the poet of the people from kinship of nature, thinking their thoughts and expressing in lovelier language than they could command, yet had sense worshipfully to admire their inward feelings, fears, aspirations and love. Browning's mind was of a subtler order, more original, more familiar with the wanderings of strange minds in strange predicaments, than with the workings of common-place brains under normal conditions. But in his own particular field he was so consummate a master that from the first he commanded an audience, small indeed, but ever increasing, and he won for himself in the course of years an illustrious place.

Swinburne, on the contrary, appears to the average reader but a detached and distant student of humanity. His view seems rather that of a being not quite human, of a creature belonging to a different order in the scale of beings. He likens himself to a storm bird, and as a bird he seems to regard humanity from far grey clouds and drifting mist. Some have said his knowledge of mankind is elementary. The word is ill chosen; for in one direction Swinburne's knowledge of man is more penetrating than

that of either Tennyson or Browning. It is an elemental view that he takes, not an elementary one. He sees, as the others never quite did, man in relation to the great cosmic forces and conditions that dominate his career, death, fate, space, time, sorrow, joy, change and eternity.

The tree of human life can be legitimately viewed in sections. You can look at its branches, knotted, twisted, interlaced, its buds, its twigs and leaves, its flower and fruit. That is the way most men look at it, that is Tennyson's way. Or it can be viewed in the stem, where hidden currents climb by devious channels from cell to cell, vessel to vessel, ascending through the sapwood, descending mysteriously through the bark in endless round, and that is Browning's way. Or, lastly, it may be looked at in the root, where filaments tenderer than cobwebs clasp the cold unsympathic stones, and that is the way of Mr. Swinburne. All three methods are true. Man is a creature of light and air and sun, a creature enjoying life, flowering in youth, fruit bearing in age. His mind is likewise a subtle mesh of complex fibres, vessels and cells, the home of mysterious currents, but his root is fixed in the stones of time and eternity.

Passing from man to his environment, we find in the views of these three poets corresponding diversity. Tennyson is always in close touch with nature, sensitive beyond the merely normal man to her real essence, her subtle evanescent charm. He is a nature poet, as the phrase goes now, of Wordsworth's school. Not so with Browning. He does not walk about the world with his eyes open, and all his senses alert for nature's most ethereal suggestions. His is the inner eye, intent on things of the spirit. Only now and again does he awake from reverie and come out of himself, and when he does it is as if a shutter were opened in his soul, letting in

the light, brilliant, dazzling, but closed again too soon. And he tells you what he has seen in that momentary flash, as one who has beheld Paradise, in words that glow, terse, pregnant, strong, suggestive. But Mr. Swinburne, with his elemental eye, sees nature calmly, with its back ground of the immensities. He is poet laureate of the sun and stars, of the sounding sea shore, crag and headland, reef and lonely rock. The sea is his, and the winds that make it their home. The clouds are his, and

Night the shadow of light,
And life, the shadow of death.

As a poet he is constantly seeking to lift the veil of nature to discover her secret, which appears to him a dream-reality, more illusive than a Platonic idea. To Mr. Swinburne all nature is symbolic. Sun, moon and stars are but exterior expressions of the hidden mystic something which he is always reaching after. And to him man's place in nature is amongst translucent formal shells that at once hide and reveal the larger entities beyond.

To summarize briefly the views of the three poets of man, Tennyson's is normal, Browning's intimate, Mr. Swinburne's relational; and of nature, the first realistic, the second impressionistic, and the third symbolic.

We must not strain these words too far, for of course no man can properly be described in this concise way. Each is this and much more, but we shall never properly understand their work unless we secure such clear notions of their leading characteristics as these terms afford. And only when we do this shall we perceive how foolish it is to compare them as if they were all of a kind, like children do colours when they say they like red better than yellow or green. The young lady who avows that she prefers Tennyson to Browning is well within her

right, because she means the one suits her better than the other, but she should not say Tennyson is a better poet than Browning, for then she is comparing things that differ generically. You may indeed compare methods, as when you say Tennyson's view of nature is realistic, like Maddox Brown's; Browning's impressionist, like Hornel's, or Swinburne's symbolic, like that of Watts. But to class the three more naturally with their own kin, Tennyson's rightful place is with Wordsworth, Keats and Spenser. Browning must take rank with the Elizabethan dramatic students of character. As for Mr. Swinburne, we shall be better able to assign him an appropriate class when we have examined his work.

In one respect all three are alike, they have all published much more verse than can by any possibility hold permanent place in English literature. Time is a stern editor who will decide what we can only guess about. Yet it requires little foresight to divine that already the content of "The Princess" is overworn, that in the busy future "Sordello's" obscurity will ward off all but serious students, and that Mr. Swinburne's too frequent habit of using twelve words where one would have been enough has already secured for many a poem from his pen what Sir Lucius O'Trigger called snug lying in the abbey.

The collected poetry of Mr. Swinburne occupies six closely packed volumes, although the chief tragedies are excluded. I shall keep closely to the poetry re-printed in the collection edition, and of this, I think we may safely say, more than half will pass into oblivion. Poets and students of poetic method will doubtless prize every composition for the sake of its perfect workmanship, for, like Shelley, Mr. Swinburne is preëminently a poet's poet. Before considering the more important sections, it may be well to dispose of the less popular, in the forefront of

which will stand the political verse. Mr. Swinburne is a political anomaly, a staunch republican, yet a stout unionist, a hater of the House of Lords and Mr. Gladstone, despising alike Little Englanders and Tory Imperialists; a worshipper of Cromwell, yet an enemy of Carlyle, his most ardent worshipper. These somewhat heterogeneous views he expounds in verse more powerful than convincing. Like Johnson he is a thoroughly good hater. Napoleon the third, the White Czar, the Pope of Rome, Romish priests in a lump, and the Christian religion, so far as it is expounded by the Vatican, all the terrible tribe of obscurantists and fetter forgers, whether for soul or body, come under his lash. The bitterness of these poems would be inexplicable did we not bear in mind that our poet is a symbolist, and that every one of these much hated persons and institutions stands for a set of ideas, of which each is but the outward and visible form. Thus, Napoleon stands for the lust and corruption of the empire, the White Czar for the tyranny of the great Russian bureaucracy. Carlyle, by speaking ill of Coleridge, Lamb and Wordsworth, becomes an incarnation of malignity and spleen. Some saving sense of humour would have moderated this, but our poet's gifts, though many, do not include that quality.

It is perhaps a serious charge to bring against anybody to deny him the sense of humour, but I think you will find confirmation of the statement if you will read the collection of parodies called *Heptalogia*. They are clever, or they would not be Mr. Swinburne's, but they are not quite funny, and without fun what is a parody worth? The best is on his friend Browning, which, strange to say, while burlesquing that poet's obscurity, fails to touch its cause. The one on the Angel in the House is too domestic. The most successful as a parody, though far from being

in the least degree humorous, is the last one, on himself and his imitators. A more important section of these comparatively unpopular poems is the large class of commemorative odes. Mr. Swinburne possesses the unique quality of acquiring inspiration on order. You would think that the "sweet waters from the wells of song" from which he draws were like the well at Giggleswick, subject to periodicity. To most writers nothing is more benumbing than the sense that you must write something because it is somebody's birthday. Not so with Mr. Swinburne. Only let an anniversary come round, and he is sure of an inspiration; and the astonishing thing is that all of these commemorative verses seem perfectly spontaneous and sincere: if they were only as inspiring as they are inspired, it were a joy to the readers, but truth to tell this is not the case. Take, for example, the commemorative odes to Hugo and Landor, in which the writings of these men are taken seriously in review, item after item, in a sort of poetical catalogue. To Mr. Swinburne all and each are sources of inspiration, and he is but giving thanks for what he has received. But grace after meat, though becoming enough for those who have enjoyed a dinner, is not inspiring to those who are only called in after the event to join in a metrical thanksgiving. To any but ardent students of Hugo and Landor, these poems are necessarily enigmatic. Mr. Swinburne, feeling this, has kindly provided notes at the end. Now, notes to poems are nuisances. If the matter does not explain and justify itself it is matter unfit for poetry, or at least for poetry intended for the general public. In the days of Scott, and the early days of Landor, poets supplied copious notes. They could not trust you to know that Morocco was a country inhabited by Moors, on the north coast of Africa, without making sure of you in a note. We don't like notes.

Another fault of these poems is their obvious hyperbole. Over and over are you told that never yet was there such a thing as this, never yet so great a hero, never yet so bright an example. Now Hugo occupies the highest point in the pyramid of honour, now Landon ascends the pedestal, now Nelson, then Grace Darling, and anon some minor celebrity. You may safely say "never yet" was there a poet more generous of praise. But somehow you feel now and then, with the Carpenter of Lewis Carroll, that the butter's spread too thick. You would prefer a more critical distribution of adjectives, and you cannot help wondering how many people are to stand on the top of that pyramid, every one of them higher up than the others. It reminds you of the problem of the schoolmen, how many angels could dance on the top of a needle? Now all this, if it be not indeed a fault, is a mannerism, and its root strikes deeper down than at first appears. When Mr. Swinburne describes an object, he seldom does so with a short, telling, descriptive adjective or adjective-phrase. On the other hand, he constantly resorts to the "never yet" principle; saying that it is more something than something else. If I want to describe an old pair of shoes I may say they are older than a watchman's rattle, a Sedan chair, or a cocked hat, and yet, after expending a hundred words, where two would have sufficed, have still failed to describe the old shoes. This sort of description, by parallels, is never so effective as direct statement. The greatest song writer, according to Mr. Swinburne, was Villon, in whose vivid, direct and wonderfully appealing style there is the minimum of parallelism, and the maximum of direct description. For parallelism is necessarily discursive; it draws the mind away from the primary thought into side issues; it dissipates it. Its tendency is to transform poems into mere records of impressions

without organic connection. You cannot remember such poetry. It pleases as you read, but when you turn the page you forget what you have read. There is no clear-cut, vivid impression, because the structure is not organic, the sequence disconnected, the images detached. This is why the ballads and the roundels, in spite of their beautiful construction, and their dainty rhymes, and their astonishing verbal aptness, seem vague, dreamy, profitless. The flowers smother one another in the garden. You faint from excess of odour. 'This, indeed, appears to me the most serious defect in Mr. Swinburne's style, its want of coherence, directness, its verbiage, its redundant flamboyancy. Words, words, what do they mean? you keep asking. There is, indeed, no Browning-like obscurity. Every sentence is structurally perfect, no inversions or awkward constructions to save a paltry rhyme, Mr. Swinburne is never hard pressed that way. He lisps in numbers and the numbers come. Rhymes drop from him like the diamonds from the lips of the good little girl in the fairy tale. The whole resources of the English language are his. He has a larger vocabulary than Shakespeare or Milton, greater facility in rhyme than Herrick, Spenser or Tennyson. And all this superabundant facility overwhelms him, betrays him into a thousand redundances, and a copiousness in the welter of which ideas struggle up to the surface gasping like drowning men, *rari natantes in gurgite vasto*.

Scattered up and down these volumes are many poems on children, childhood and infancy, so many indeed, as to form a distinct class of their own. Mr. Swinburne is happiest with long clothes' babies, to whom he dedicates many dainty rhymes. True, he sees the nursery monarch only when he is good, nor hints anywhere that the fair exterior may hide a sleeping volcano. But with babies in

their gracious moments he is *facile princeps* among the poets. He is not so fortunate with older children, not because he loves them less, but because his poetical method hinders the presentation of their personality. Under the heading of "A Dark Month," he offers a sequence commemorative of the absence for thirty-one dreary days of a little boy, the sunshine of his home. Now you may read these poems through and through without once getting sight of that elusive boy. You want to know who he is, what he does, but no, none of these things can you learn. In place is offered you the poet's feelings at the absence of his pet, the dullness of hill, and field, and river, the weary way the hours drag on, and how this little child is more to him than this and that and the other. There are, however, poems in this class of great tenderness and beauty, like that on the child weeping for the little alligators starving on the banks of a river, as lovely in conception as it is dainty in execution. If then you wish to know what thoughts a child may inspire in the sensitive heart of a poet, you will find all you want here, but if you want to learn what children are you had better buy a *Child's Garden of Verse*, by a man who was not a poet, but knew children as other people know the multiplication table—Robert Louis Stevenson.

So far, then, we have traced the vagueness of many poems and roundels to the tendency to describe by parallels in preference to direct description, leading to redundancy and the loss of organic connection and regular growth of the idea; and this we have supplemented by a corresponding expression of preference for subjective rather than objective methods generally.

These peculiarities lie far back, affecting matter rather than form, and may be regarded as dominant notes of the poet's mind. There are other notable marks of style

which we must consider next. Before doing so, it will be convenient to mention one or two elementary laws governing the construction of English verse.

In English poetry, words may rhyme at both ends. When they rhyme at the beginning, they do so by a consonant usually, and the line in which such rhymes occur is called alliterative. There is no rule as to the number of such repetitions, nor is it of any consequence whether they occur at the opening or close of a syllable. The object of their introduction is to give force to a passage, or to imitate some natural sound or process. The softer consonantal sounds are employed where peaceful and melodious effects are sought, the harsher colloca-tions for strident music, for the crash of arms, or the battle of elemental powers. The following passage from "Erecheus" will furnish an example:

Death at last for all men is a harbour; yet they flee from it,
Set sails to the storm-wind and again to sea;
Yet for all their labour no whit further shall they be from it,
Nor longer but wearier shall their life's work be.
And with anguish of travail until night
Shall they steer into shipwreck out of sight,
And with oars that break and shrouds that strain
Shall they drive where no ship steers again.
Bitter and strange is the word of the God most high,
And steep the strait of his way.
Through a pass rock-rimmed and narrow the light that gleams
On the faces of men falls faint as the dawn of dreams,
The dayspring of death as a star in an under sky,
Where night is the dead men's day.

Of rhymes proper no poet has a richer store, and they are all most wonderfully at command.

Yet he never has recourse to outlandish double rhymes. He would not think of making "anciently" rhyme with "Abbot's eye," as Mr. Browning does, or "purposes"

rhyme with "yes," or "accomplishment" with "prevent" where the rhyme is only visual. Nor is it ever needful for him to turn a sentence inside out in order to get the rhyming word at the end of a line. His confidence in the resources of the English language, or of his own absolute command of them, are notable in many poems where the construction is of the most complicated nature. He presents his reader with a long sequence of poems in which the rhyme is not only faultless in each, but all are cast in the same rhyme scheme, so that every set of verses in the series rhymes with every other set, after the fashion of the Provincial poets. No one ever thought of doing that before, because it was assumed that the English tongue was not sufficiently rich in rhyming words to make such a feat possible. Nor do these poems suffer in the least from the rigorous laws thus imposed, for they run as easily as if they were unrhymed. Of course this was a *tour de force*, but it has demonstrated the extraordinary and hitherto unknown capacity of the English language. Henceforward no one need speak apologetically of English as inferior to Italian or Spanish, or any other language. A tongue that can allow of this is good enough surely for any purpose.

The "Ballad of Balen" is constructed on the following rhyme scheme—a, a, a, a (four lines rhyming), b, c, c, c, b, eight syllable lines, and 263 verses. It is a perfectly marvellous accomplishment. There is in the whole of the ballad not one inversion for rhyming purpose, not one far-fetched word, the whole runs as smoothly as if this extremely exacting scheme had no existence.

If you pass from rhyme to metre you find the same exuberance. Mr. Swinburne has invented more metrical forms, modified more, combined in fresh forms so as to create more than any other English poet. He seems able

to turn the most unlikely collocations of syllables into perfectly musical rhythm. The secret of this is his matchless ear for the time pulse. For English poetry demands a recurrent time beat with greater insistence than syllabic regularity. This fact seems to have escaped the notice of several nineteenth century poets; notably Wordsworth and Browning, the former writing many prose lines under the impression that he was writing poetry, mislead by the correctness of the feet; while the latter, notably in his early work, "Sordello," sacrificed the inflexional "to" of the infinitive, and a host of minor particles, to secure this regularity, although thereby involving the sense in the darkest obscurity. I doubt if you will find a hypermetrical line in "Sordello," but you will find plenty where the sound beat is ignored.

Mr. Swinburne's musical ear is a safe preservative against faults of this kind. A redundant syllable does not trouble him, if sense requires it. He is incapable of mistaking a prose for a poetic rhythm, he cannot turn poetry to prose, but he can turn prose into poetry, or, to speak more correctly, he can detect in an apparently prose line an underlying verse form. Thus, in the saying, "Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it," the spondaic structure, so rare in English verse, where spondees are hard to find, is quite evident to him.

This is how Mr. Swinburne handles them :—

Many waters cannot quench love,
 Neither can the floods drown it,
 Who shall snare or slay the white dove?
 Faith, whose very dreams crown it.
 Gird it round with grace and peace, deep,
 Warm and pure, and soft as sweet sleep.
 Many waters cannot quench love.
 Neither can the floods drown it.

Of all the metrists, not excluding Æschylus or Pindar,

Mr. Swinburne stands at the head unsurpassed; and it is no small gift that he has bestowed upon England that, through his genius, her literature should take her place in regard to variety of metrical form at the head of all literatures of every age; but without music even this endowment would have been unfruitful, and Mr. Swinburne's verse, for purely musical form, for its singing quality, is equally unapproachable. Yet music and metre, even when blended, do not make great poetry, and, indeed, as we know from the case of Browning, great poetry can exist without either, so that it is not finally by this test that poets, small or great, must ultimately be judged. It is the soul of verse that makes it great or small. Granting that the form of Mr. Swinburne's verse be faultless, what are we to say of the soul? To answer this we must pass from those poems that express merely momentary and fleeting sensations, the passing thoughts of passing hours, to those that indicate serious study, those that are the product of a mind faring forth into regions where few come and go, and where none are easily at home. Among poems of this serious sort must unquestionably be classed the great poetical tragedies—"Atalanta," "Tristram," "Balén," and "Erechtheus." "Atalanta" deals with the love of a mother for her son. "Tristram" the way of a man with a maid. "Balén" of brotherly love. "Erechtheus" of the love of fatherland.

Of "Atalanta in Calydon" it is difficult to speak without enthusiasm, at once so fine is it in conception and so artistic in form. Naturally, one compares it with the "Prometheus Unbound" of Shelley, for the two poets are now and again singularly alike. But here the differences are far more notable. Shelley—so exuberant, so imaginative, so varied, so entirely romantic, so utterly remote from Æschylus in every element of high impassioned verse;

Swinburne—so classic, calm, self-restrained, so purely artistic in his great handling, cold, almost pitiless, and yet so stately. Where Shelley is strong in passion, Swinburne is reserved, almost chill. But while the imagination and passion in Shelley are powerful, the thought is often pale, almost ghostly. In Swinburne the thought is rich, deep, personal, yet presented always in classic form, even when apparently most modern. While “Atalanta” can show no passage of lyric fervour like:—

Life of life thy lips enkindle,
With their love the breath between them,
And thy smiles before they dwindle
Make the cold air fire; then screen them.
In those looks where whoso gazes
Faints entangled in their mazes.

Yet on the other hand, no passage in “Prometheus” can equal in dignity and weight of thought the sublime Choric ode in “Atalanta.”

Before the beginning of years
There came to the making of man
Time, with the gift of tears;
Grief with a glass that ran;
Pleasure, with pain for leaven;
Summer, with flowers that fell;
Remembrance, fallen from heaven,
And madness risen from hell;
Strength without hands to smite,
Love that endures for a breath;
Night, the shadow of light,
And life, the shadow of death.

But the whole of “Atalanta” is a poem so splendid in diction, so glorious in soul, that to have written it alone would have given its author a place among the greatest poets of his land.

To pass from this purely Grecian tragedy to “Tristram

and Iseult" is, for those who are unfamiliar with the Greek tragedians, to pass from unknown to familiar lands. The Arthurian cycle of romance has been transplanted from mediæval into modern life by Tennyson in the "Idylls of the King," and it is therefore natural to contrast the treatment of similar subjects by widely dissimilar minds. Reading the poems carefully side by side, we are struck with several points of difference. The setting of the scene is in Tennyson romantic, conventional, mediæval. The background of the stately panorama seems transferred bodily from some beautiful illuminated manuscript. The trees, the streams, the hills and dales are not depicted from nature but art. And this gives to the successive scenes the misty atmosphere of romance, through the very touches of pre-Raphaelite precision with which that atmosphere is created. In Swinburne, on the contrary, the setting is broadly natural, vividly, intensely natural. The sea is the same that beats to-night along our shores, the very sea we know and love. The land is equally real, strong, vivid. Among such familiar scenes, viewed with the poet's eyes, that catch immediately as by a second sight the totality of impression, or soul of the landscape, are these two lovely figures, Tristram and Iseult, pitiful, pathetic beings, seen through tears, faring onward, poor star-crossed lovers, to their inevitable doom. And the result is a poem with less story to hold you, less variety, less scene shifting, but vastly greater spirituality, vastly deeper insight and love of the heart for heart's sake. Read the intercession of Iseult for her wandering lover on the stormy night in the lonely tower by the sea. It is one of the most pathetic pictures in modern poetry. There are faults in Tristram obvious to any reader, such as the marriage with the second Iseult, and the vague relations of the first with her nominal husband, but these belong to

the story as it was told in times gone by. And we must remember that it is veracity of emotion, not of episode, that is important in tragedy.

To appreciate "Tristram and Iseult" you must take your time over it, for it is an excursive poem, projected on a large scale, exuberant in diction, spacious as sea and air. It requires five pages to describe Tristram taking his morning bath in the sea; but what a picture it is—of the grey waste of water, of the rising of the sun, of Tristram's glorious battle with the waves as the strong swimmer beats out seaward, of the ripples that "laugh and lapse against his feet" when he stands praising God for life and light and strength; yet:—

Wist not surely its joy was even as fleet
As that which laughed and lapsed against his feet,
The bright thin grey foam-blossom, glad and hoar,
That flings its flower along the flowerless shore,
On sand or shingle, and still with sweet strange snows
As where one great white storm-dishevelled rose
May rain her wild leaves on a windy land,
Strews for long leagues the sounding slope of strand,
And flower on flower falls flashing, and anew,
A fresh light leaps up where the last flash flew,
And casts its brief glad gleam of life away
To fade not flowerwise, but as drops the day
Storm smitten, when at once the dark devours
Heaven and the sea and earth and all her flowers.

You see how leisurely this is. No hasty picture, no swift flung image, but the studious development of imagery until the picture of the white wave-strewn shore reveals itself in the mind, bright, vivid as reality. In all these volumes you never get out of hearing of the sea. Now it is the vast trackless Western ocean, beating on the Cornish crags; now the long waves breaking over the Casquets; now the sullen sea, veiled in a mist, silent,

waiting ; now the same sea stirred by the rising wind ; the sea at night, the sea at the breaking of day, the sea in every mood, grave, gay, lively, or severe, but ever the sea. No poet has known the salt brine like he ; no, nor the rough wild foliage of the sea cliffs, ablaze in the sun ; the birds that haunt the shore with their wild strange cries and their life of liberty. He takes you by the shore in his lonely walks, and shows you the grey towers and spires that watch the centuries out, while slowly the sea creeps in on the crumbling sands.

He stands so long gazing seaward, the birds come near about him as though he were some sea mark, harmless and immovable. Is he looking for some ship "that brings his friends up from the under world?" No ; that is the subject of song for a far more human poet. This is the philosophic singer of time and change, of night and day, of fate, of the mystery of life and the mystery of death. The sea to him is the only changeless element in a world of flux. Nothing stays, nothing abides but this great waste, this wilderness of waves. Men come and go like the birds, that know their homes and their resting place at night. But the sea remains lord of earth, master of change, twin comrade of the changeless sun. If he thinks of man it is in relation to these great cosmic entities, these unmeasurable powers that outlive man and his day.

You will not find in this detached far away view of man the tender humanism of Tennyson, nor yet the deep heart knowledge of Browning, for it is a view at once philosophic, and poetic, and ethereal. Nor is there again in this view of a wind-swept, sun-illumined world of Mr. Swinburne's that penetrative realism that marks Tennyson as a poet of Wordsworth's school. The difference in the view of nature is the difference of philosophy and science—the one broad, abstracted, immaterial ; the

other minute, searching, exact. He differs again from Browning, but in another way, for Browning was an artist who painted nature from memory, not from immediate observation. We know how vivid are the pictures he could create in a few master touches when he seemed suddenly to throw open the shutters, as I have said, of the soul, and let in upon the metaphysical furniture of his brain the outside sunshine. But those who know Italy well, and her seasons, tell us that these brilliant episodes are seldom true to life. Birds do not actually come just as he would have you suppose, or flowers bloom, or fruit ripen at the seasons he assumes. Yet he is not untrue to his vision of nature. He tells you what he saw, though he forgets when and where. Now there is none of this confusion of the seasons in Mr. Swinburne—but then there is not one half the happy terseness of description, that in half a dozen words creates a scene, brilliant and strong as reality. Mr. Swinburne's open air method requires a world of words, for half its beauty and its truth are enshrined in the wonderful resonant, sonorous language, which by sheer force of melody expounds and reveals the hidden music of nature. Mr. Swinburne is a modern Pagannini, with words for his violin, words that ring and sing. In Browning there was no music, or rather, no word music. His verse is crabbed, forceful, strong, but intensely vital. With Mr. Swinburne the words are so copious that unkindly critics have said he is words and nothing else. Certainly it is a defect in some of his finest tragedies that the Choric odes are diluted, and that the speeches are occasionally very long. Nor would I defend the excessively expanded descriptive portions of "Tristram of Lyonesse." But you must take a poet as you find him, as you take a painter. If he requires a large canvass you must let him have one.

Of all modern poets Mr. Swinburne is perhaps the most unequal. The volume called a *Midsummer Holiday* strikingly illustrates this inequality, the poem that gives its title to the volume being one of the most brilliant in the whole of the nineteenth century poetic literature, a poem that it is impossible adequately to praise, one that would place any author in the very first rank, so splendid is it alike in form and in ripeness of thought. In this same volume are some dainty verses on young children, a "New Year's Ode to Hugo," which, to ordinary readers, not steeped in the wide literature of that master, is far from inspiring, and still further down the grade, a silly section of turgid political verse. Poets should leave politics to professional politicians and the newspaper men who know everything, for however honest they may be in their loves and hates, however patriotic and well meaning in their sentiments, they are sure to cause offence by crudities and ignorances that should bring a blush to the blushless schoolboy. In "*Vos Deos Laudamus*" our poet essays to ridicule a silly and ill-written paragraph in the *Saturday Review*, which he first misunderstands, and then curses—a trivial thing utterly unworthy of a poet, unless he be a political poet laureate, paid by the piece and praised by the press. But the sheer beauty of the *Midsummer Holiday* would outweigh a wilderness of triviality.

Another volume, displaying the same inequality of merit, is that entitled *Studies in Song*. The first poem in this book is a commemorative song on Walter Savage Landor, his friend and literary master. But to appreciate it, and it is really in its own way a fine work, one must be steeped to the eyes in Landor, one must have the *Imaginary Conversation* at one's fingers ends; or else, and this is a distressful alternative, one must be for ever turning to the notes. In the same volume will be found

some pretty child verses, and one or two political pieces of far more fibre than those in the *Midsummer Holiday*. But the grandest by far is that entitled "By the North Sea," a philosophical poem, glorious in diction, weighty in thought, and suffused with the very soul of song. No statelier psalm or canticle has been uplifted since Milton sang of man's first disobedience. Yet it is far deeper and more spiritual than "Paradise Lost," for it is not an epic, not a story often told and told again, but a close grapple with nature, the heart's struggle to reach the deepest mysteries of life and death, the meaning of the secret of the world. In it you find the struggle of a soul

To know the secret word our mother saith
In silence, and to see, though doubt wax great,
Death as the shadow cast by life on fate
Passing, whose shade we call the shadow of death.

In this poem the genius of Mr. Swinburne reaches its highest level. It is pre-eminently philosophic, but it is the work of a poet philosopher. In not one line does the singer forget the limits and genius of song. Never does he, as Browning in his later work, allow philosophy to untune his lyre. Never does he, as Wordsworth in his philosophising mood, sink into prose. It is a poem as full of music as the finest work of Shelley; but far more earnest, wistful, longing. It is the song of an Orpheus telling of what he saw in the underworld. It is the song of an Ulysses, wandering by the sounding sea, where all at once is real and unreal, strong earth and sea, the vague mist and dream. If ever poet struggled to reach the inwardness of nature, and to discern through clouds and thick darkness the way of the Almighty on the sea, the symbol of fate, the way of his going in the night the symbol of death, in the sun the symbol of life eternal, as Æsculus and Sophocles, surely it was this.

That Mr. Swinburne has contributed materially to our definite knowledge of the undercurrents of life and destiny, I am not prepared to assert. The contributions of poetry are not facts or inferences that can be fitted accurately into any philosophic scheme. It is not the business of poetry to advance learning in that manner. Her task is to reveal the realities which philosophy veils in technical language, or slurs over as accidental and unessential. In a sense, philosophy is superficial where poetry is profound. Perhaps it would be fairer to say philosophy deals with things in the abstract, stripped of all associations, naked and bare; whereas poetry treats of them as they appear clad in the mysterious garments that imagination and memory have woven for them. Or, to take a simpler illustration, the philosopher handles facts as the cotton broker deals with bales of cotton, regarding them merely from the standard of profit and loss, as so much materialized money; whereas the poet views them as would the traveller in the cotton belt, who watches the plant ripening in semi-tropic sun-glows, who sees the bales hoisted to the decks of ocean-going craft, or dragged laboriously through the crowded streets of a city.

It is impossible to read the North Sea poem without feeling that you have been brought face to face with the foundation principles of nature, that you have been amongst realities that hitherto you have merely known under the conventional disguise of abstract names and commonplace equivalents.

In the *Midsummer Holiday*, to which I have already referred, Mr. Swinburne takes us to the Eastern coast, where the sea chafes the crumbling cliffs, engulfing by slow encroachments the ancient fields and homesteads, which man supposed were as safe as the everlasting hills. The poem consists of a series of lyrics, cast in the same

mould, and knit together by recurrent refrains of exquisite melody, which float in like the chime of Sabbath bells. Far, indeed, it were to seek a sequence more delicate alike in execution and conception, more luminous, more purely English, homelike, redolent of meadow land and lea. Here will you find the childlike exuberance of Chaucer, the sonorous splendour of Milton, the pensiveness of Gray, the silvery flute-note of Shelley. It has no nineteenth century mannerisms, no marks that can attach it to any special age. It is the poetry of all time, the voice of humanity, the murmur of the green fields that Shakespeare wandered in, the sighing of the sea that knows no change though the stone age passes into the age of iron, on its way, perhaps, to an age of gold. It is only supremely great poetry that carries this distinction of universality.

In the poetry of Mr. Swinburne there is much that will pass, much that ought to pass, much that is antagonistic, forced, polemical, much, too, that is the product of prejudice and half knowledge, there are in many of his verses mannerisms without beauty, an otiosity that it is difficult to excuse, an expansiveness that wearies, a lack of concision and that rare power of hitting the mark in a choice brief phrase or pregnant word, but when you have sifted out the political diatribes, the overstated praise, the remorseless bitterness of condemnation, there yet remains a large body of verse of a character so noble that it is difficult to speak of it with moderation. Swinburne's kinship is with Milton and Shelley, and his influence on poetics as an art will probably exceed theirs. It is impossible that the standard of poetic craftsmanship can remain unaffected by verse so conscientiously flawless, so rich in diction, and so melodious. For all his sacrifices to the genius of painstaking, lovers of rule and form owe Mr. Swinburne no little thanks. For his high chivalry, too, in

an age called decadent, for his brave championship of liberty, for his noble scorn of hypocrisy in every shape, for his passionate advocacy of the rights of man, individual and collective, even the least responsive of his critics must yield him praise.

The faults on which his detractors love most to dwell are in large measure the defects of the symbolic style. It is impossible to deal largely in symbols, forcing concrete cases to posture as the exponents of general truths without frequent injustice to the individual, without over statement both of praise and blame. Due to such causes we may charitably judge the strange, repellant, scornful address to a crucifix, where the emblem of Christian faith stands as a symbol for obscurantist ultramontanism, defiant of light and freedom of thought, scornful in its turn of all the poet holds dearest and noblest in life.

As an example of exaggerated praise, we naturally recall the magnificent laudatory lines in the poem on Italy, addressed to Mazzini, which read more like a glorious *Te Deum* than the sober praises of a rational poet, a rhapsody in which the soul of Mazzini stands transfigured as the symbol of the glorious spirit of awaked Italy. To understand such effusions of scorn or adoration, we must remember that the subject praised or blamed is but the sign of something else. So deeply is the symbolic method engrained in this poet, that he can view nothing without making it the sign of a greater. His Pegasus is ever on the point of mounting from the furrowed field to the grey clouds and the sun beyond them. He never leaves his readers long a-dallying in honeysuckle scented lanes and shady hollows, for his heart is with the sea and the sea's master, the wild winds, and the sun, their lord. The largeness of vision, the spaciousness of Mr. Swinburne are displayed in all his more serious poetry. He

rightly calls himself the storm bird, for the storm bird mounts high, flies far, surveys the waste of water, the rugged coast and the long low shores, with the sense of the clouds above him and illimitable space, sun, moon and stars, night, morning, and the infinite of time embracing the little world in which men sow and reap.

It has often been asked, does Mr. Swinburne believe in eternity, in the immortality of the soul, in worlds not realised? I think he does, but diffidently, hesitatingly, as one who fears to cheat himself with a mirage, who will not barter what he deems the meagre but real bird in the hand for hypothetic possibilities. He wants to believe that friends he has loved, and loved with a generous effusion of love, are not all lost, yet he will not depart by a hair's breadth from what is certain, or cheat himself with one elusive hope. Surely an honest man this, though prejudiced sometimes, and ever at odds with a world of shams and hypocrisies. A man more self-restrained if less impassioned than Shelley, more varied, though less balanced than Milton, but a noble poet after their heart, and of their own school.

STOICISM AND MARCUS AURELIUS.

BY REV. E. N. HOARE, M.A.

THE popular conception of a Stoic is that of a sort of an intellectual Red Indian—a man who despises, or affects to despise pain; who scorns to exhibit any trace of emotion; who endures all sorts of tortures without flinching; a brave, much-enduring, easily satisfied man; brave, but withall, arrogant, passionless, inhuman; a disagreeably superior person, decidedly “too good for human nature’s daily food.”

Over against this figure, and contrasted with him in the popular imagination, as the publican with the Pharisee of the immortal parable, stands the Epicurean—a good fellow, frankly following pleasure; self-indulgent, seeking happiness for its own sake, but kind-hearted and willing that others should be happy too. “Live and let live,” that would be his appropriate motto.

I am not concerned to criticise these conceptions; nor yet to consider the philosophical doctrines of the two great rival schools that emerged in Greece after the era of Aristotle and Plato. What I have to note is the widely different influence of the two schools on the education of the modern world. The modern man may think the Epicurean “a jolly good fellow”; well, he gave to the world the immortal poem of Lucretius, and to language the word *epicure*. The same modern man may judge the Stoic a prig; but the Stoic gave to the world an idea that has never ceased to bear fruit, and a teaching that has been one of the most potent factors in forming the mind of this modern man himself, little as he suspects it.

It did this rather as a religion than as a philosophy. For a religion it had become when it was brought into contact with the Christianity of the second century. "The basis of Christian society is not Christian, but Roman and Stoical," says Dr. Hatch in his Hibbert Lectures on "The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church." Dr. Rendall thus sums up the influence of Stoicism throughout the entire range of its history.

Founded in the fourth century B.C., it was a quick and growing creed in the second century A.D.; living, it survived transplantation from the Greek world to the Roman, from the school and the cloister to the senate and the throne; dying, it bequeathed no small part of its disciplines, its dogmas, and its phraseology to the Christianity by which it was ingathered. In these respects its history resembles that of a religion rather than a speculative system; while its range, from Socrates to M. Antoninus, covers almost all that was permanent in the ancient culture, and even survived the wreck of European paganism.

It is my object in this paper to give some account of the book through which the last of the Stoic teachers, in the direct line of succession, is known to us. But in order to understand Marcus Aurelius it will be desirable to take a glance backward over the earlier history of philosophical speculation, and to trace the evolution by which, in its final Latin form, and as interpreted by its three great Roman exponents—Epictetus, Seneca, and Marcus Aurelius—Stoicism, as already said, had become a religion. For it was as an ethic, a guide to life and conduct, that it was taught and learned in Roman Society; a society thus described by a recent writer:—

God is no longer a mere intellectual postulate, the necessary crown and lord of a great cosmic system. He has become a moral necessity. His existence is demanded by the heart as well as by the

intellect. Men craved no longer for a God to explain the universe, but to resolve the enigma of their own lives; not a blind force, moving on majestically and mercilessly to "some far-off event," but an Infinite Father, guiding in wisdom, cherishing in mercy, and finally receiving His children to Himself. This is the conception of God which, from Seneca to Marcus Aurelius, is mastering the best minds, both Stoic and Platonist.—Dill's *Roman Society*.

Let me try very briefly to indicate the lines of the historical evolution through which this point of view was reached to.

If it be that "the proper study of mankind is man," it was by no means its primitive study. The first philosophy was objective rather than subjective. It was not the mind of man in its various modes of perception, reflection, desire, will and effort, but rather the riddle of the material universe that excited the curiosity of the early thinkers whose names, and little more, have come down to us. What is the visible world made of? Is there any underlying, unifying principle at the back of its ever-changing and multitudinous phenomena? These questions were answered variously, but always from a materialistic basis. Thus Thales, the semi-traditional founder of the Ionic philosophy, announced that the primal foundation of all things was water; others claimed this prerogative for air; others (Anaximander) for an original chaotic matter, which seems to have been conceived as something behind the "four elements"—earth, air, fire and water—described in a later century by Empedocles. Next Pythagoras, who is said to have flourished between 540 and 500 B.C., maintained that "number is the essence of all things," which probably meant that matter is to be conceived as existing in time and space. With the Eleatics (best represented by Parmenides) the ultimate reality becomes a pure abstraction. It is absolutely removed from the field

of experience; it is "the one" which is God, of which nothing positive can be predicated except that it is Thought.

This conception was no doubt an advance on the crude speculations of earlier times; but in absolutely separating being from existence it logically destroyed the whole phenomenal world, and left nothing to be explained.

Out of this dilemma the genius of Heraclitus found a way. With him the principle of the universe was not static but dynamic; it is neither being nor not being, but a perpetual *becoming*. Movement, change—that is the one reality. "All things are in flow" expresses his doctrine. He also speaks of the element of fire, not as an original principle, but as the agency through which the principle of movement operates.

Accepting the doctrine of Heraclitus, the question inevitably arises as to the cause of this *becoming*. Why is everything in flow? What is the force that makes the movement? This inquiry leads on to the idea of energy as separate from matter, and something by which it is moulded and moved. What then is the nature of that energy? What is it that itself unmoved, is the mover of all things? Anaxagoras was the first to answer that question by his famous doctrine of the *Noûs*—"a world-forming intelligence, absolutely separated from all matter and working with design." (Schwegler).

In this way we are brought on, through the exaggerated and empirical subjectivity of the Sophists, to the principle of absolute subjectivity as taught by Socrates. Now for the first time the free will of man stands forth as a potent factor in the universe. The mind takes its proper place, and in the Platonic system, claims a reality transcending that of any material existence. Psychology and ethics thus enter the field of human life and labour, prepared

henceforth to hold their own against physics and metaphysics.

But not all at once was mind emancipated from its environment. In the systems both of Plato and Aristotle man is thought of as existing in a community; he is a social being, and he can only reach his highest good, and his most perfect development, as the citizen of a perfect state. He is dependent on his environment, scarcely conceived apart from it. But it is evident that environment is a mere accident. Against such slavery to circumstances the Cynic philosophy was a violent revolt. No man could be truly wise or happy so long as he was dependent on external things—things not within his own power, and things that might fail him at any moment. Therefore the philosopher must cut himself free from these things and live wholly independent of them. Self-centred, no tyrant, no chance, no vicissitude of fortune could touch him.

Such views, noble in themselves, were pushed to violent and even disgusting lengths by the Cynics; but they were taken up and wrought into a sober, if stern philosophy of life by the Stoics. Zeno, the founder of the school, was a disciple of the Cynic Creteas, before he became an independent teacher in the Porch; and we find Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus, at the end of a long line of teachers, coupling the name of the Cynic Diogenes with that of Socrates as alike worthy of veneration.

And the course of history tended to enforce the importance of the fundamental Cynic doctrine of the supremacy of the moral will, and the independence of the individual which Stoicism had taken to its inmost soul. The perfect city-state was no longer possible—the independence of Greece had passed away. And when, in its Latin form, the full significance of Stoicism was revealed

to the world, the political outlook was of the gloomiest. Epictetus and Seneca taught and lived and died under the fell shadow of the tyrant Nero; and though Marcus Aurelius imparted a glory to the purple such as never before or since has illumined it, the horizon was indeed dark around him. Moral corruption and the signs of decay were everywhere; the first ominous mutterings of the impending storm of barbarian invasion were already being carried over Italy on the cold North wind! The Stoic thinker was thus, by stress of circumstances, driven inward on himself, and compelled to attempt the impossible task of constructing an ideal life of happiness and virtue that should be altogether independent of social environment, and even of the most "outrageous fortune." This was only to be attempted by a stern suppression of the emotional side of man's nature, and the cultivation of that apathy which is a fundamental in the Stoic doctrine. Yet apathy does not mean, as Dr. Caird well explains, "the absence of all feeling and desire, but the quenching of all such feeling and desire as is produced by an undue estimate of external things. The whole intensity of emotion and impulse, the whole energy of our being, is to be concentrated upon the one thing needful, the inner state of the mind and will." It is the "good will" that matters; all else is indifferent, and among things indifferent, it is conceded, there may be choice and preference.

In speaking of the derivation of Stoicism through Cynicism, it must be noted that the later philosophy was saved from the extreme individualism of the earlier by its recognition of all-prevailing law. The individualism of the Cynic tended to arrogance, self-conceit, eccentricity. But the Stoic only found his individual life in order that he might lose it. In Stoicism every personal aim must be subordinated to universal law; hence, pleasure (which is

essentially personal) is absolutely excluded as an end. With the Stoic the maxim "follow nature" does not mean, as it might have done with some Cynics, and has too often done with naturalistic teachers since, "return to barbarism, give free scope to every animal instinct, live for self and fight for self." It means something very different. It means that man's highest good is to be found, not in the transient conventionalities of a so-called civilization, but in shaping his life in conformity with the laws of nature, nature being essentially rational and divine.

To explain this conception of nature as rational and moral, a few words must be said as to the physical and metaphysical basis of Stoicism.

As soon as the fundamental distinction between mind and matter, form and stuff, subject and object, thought and extension, the universal and the concrete, becomes realised (as we saw just now it did in the teaching of Anaxagoras), then the solution of what proves to be not merely a distinction, but a contrariety and an opposition, may be sought along one or other of two paths—the path of dualism or the path of monism. Dualism simply recognises the two factors, and discusses their interaction. Greater stress may be laid on one factor or the other, but no attempt is made to unify them. Thus it was with Plato and Aristotle. In the systems of both philosophers the material of things is something different from the idea or form which shapes them. The second verse in the Bible, taken alone, expresses a primitive dualism:—"The earth was without form . . . the Spirit of God moved."

The other path leads to what is called monism; and I venture to suggest that this view may be popularly expressed as taking one of three forms:—(1) Mind creates

what we call matter, that is, phenomena are produced by ideas; this is idealism. It is expressed in the first verse of Genesis—"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." (2) Conversely, mind may be conceived as evolved from matter—thought, being a sort of chemical by-product of brain; this is materialism. (3) Both mind and matter may be regarded as phenomena of a reality behind them; this is the form of monism that seems to be commending itself to the "higher physics" of our own time. Thus we find Sir Oliver Lodge expressing his own creed in the magnificent words of Pope:—

All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body nature is, and God the soul.

is the monism of Spinoza, to whom thought and extension are only different attributes under which the one principle is revealed.

And this, I believe, is the monism of the Stoics; not a blank materialism, but a conception of deity as immanent in the world, which is therefore regarded as a living thing, moved and directed by God, just as the human body or "shell" is by the spiritual conscious principle which is itself a part of the Reason that directs and controls the universe. The Stoic cannot conceive any existence that is not corporeal; but this does not mean that he is a materialist, or even a pantheist. For though the supreme reason is only conceived as revealing itself through what may be called an organism, it does not necessarily follow that it has no separate or independent existence.

There is, no doubt, a certain confusion and inconsistency about Stoic metaphysics; thus at one time we are told that the world is a product or manifestation of divine reason, and at another that all things flow from and return to the "fiery breath which is the quintessence of all matter." In using such phrases Stoicism betrays the fact

that it grounds its philosophy on that teaching of Heraclitus to which I have already referred, in which the distinction of subject and object, matter and form, had no place.

Perhaps I have too long delayed to ask your attention to the famous book through which the ethical principles of the Stoic teaching have been commended to the world of Christendom by the gentle, persuasive, and noble pleading of one of the loftiest souls that the course of human history has revealed to us. But I hope that this hurried and imperfect introduction may do something towards elucidating what is to follow, and enabling the casual hearer to appreciate the significance of some of the passages I shall quote.

The *Thoughts* or *Meditation* of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus are arranged in twelve books, and consist of a number of detached reflections, written down apparently just as they occurred to him, and without any effort at methodical arrangement or any idea of publication. This is shown by the only authentic title of the book, *Τὰ εἰς ἑαυτόν*, the reflections were written to and for himself.

In Book I he gratefully recalls the names and characteristics of those who had, by precept or example, influenced his early training. Thus—"From my grandfather, Verus, integrity and command of temper." His own father, Annius Verus, having died (A.D. 121) when he was three months old, he can but say that he had learned from his reputation, "Self-respect and manliness."

His mother taught him to be "God-fearing and liberal; to check, not merely evil actions but thoughts; simplicity in daily living, and avoidance of the ways of opulence."

He then describes his indebtedness to his various tutors; and we must conclude that never was any youth—

royal or otherwise—more highly favoured in respect of wise and manly teachers! Thus, “From Diognetus nobility of aim; disbelief in sorcerers and wizards, distaste for quail-fighting and other such excitements, aspirations after the plank bed and skin, and the other requirements of Greek training. From Rusticus, not to give hasty assent to chatterers.”

Finally, he sums up what he owes to the gods in a very interesting passage. He expresses thankfulness that his youth had been kept pure amid many temptations. He speaks of his “imperial father,” meaning Antoninus, by whom he had been adopted in the year 138, the year in which Antoninus himself had been adopted by Hadrian. And it is interesting to note that the loyalty that earned for Antoninus the epithet Pius, he found repaid to him in Marcus, of whom it is recorded that, in the course of twenty-three years, he only slept two nights away from the home of his adoption.

Of his wife, Faustina, to whose name a considerable amount of scandal attaches, he speaks most tenderly. “Thanks, too, for such a wife—so submissive, so affectionate, so gentle.”

In the opening paragraphs of Book II, we find several of the specific principles of Stoicism referred to—

When you wake up say to yourself—To-day I shall encounter meddling, ingratitude, violence, cunning, malice, self-seeking; all of them the result of men not knowing what is good and what evil.

Flesh, breath and the inner self, that is all.

In the gods' work there is providence everywhere.

To every part of nature, that which nature brings, and which helps towards its conservation, is good.

This thought of the “inner self,” the “deity within,” the “ruling part,” is an ever recurring one, and is, in fact, the key note of his teaching.

Book III speaks of the duty and beauty of life, the significance, importance and fitness of all things. Here is a passage with the very note and colour of John Ruskin in it—

Watch well the grace and charm that belong even to the consequents of nature's work. The cracks, for instance, and crevices in bread crust, though in a sense flaws in the baking, yet have a fitness of their own and a special stimulus to tickle the appetite. And again, figs when they are quite ripe gape open. In ripe olives the very nearness to decay adds its own beauty to the fruit. The bending ears of corn, the lion's scowl, the foam that drips from the wild boar's mouth, and many other things, though in themselves far from beautiful, yet looked at as consequents of nature's handiwork, add new beauty and appeal to the soul, so that if only one attains deeper feeling and insight for the workings of the universe, almost everything, seen in its consequents and accidents, seems to yield some pleasing combination of its own. Thus the actual jaws of living beasts will not be less picturesque than the imitations produced by artists and sculptors. The old man and the old woman will have an ideal loveliness. . . . Such things will not appeal to all, but will strike him only who is in harmony with nature and has become familiar with her works.

Throughout Book IV, the blessedness of the life lived in accordance with nature—of the individual life realised as a part of the whole—is the ever-recurring idea.

When the sovereign power within is true to nature, its attitude towards outward circumstances is that of ready adjustment to whatever is possible and offered for acceptance.

Freely resign yourself to Clotho, helping her to spin her thread of what stuff she will.

This very well indicates the Stoic attitude towards the problem of free will. Man is free to choose a voluntary obedience; but in any case he must obey. It is for him to realise that the law of reason, of which he is conscious in himself, is but a part of and one with the law of universal reason that controls all things. This is the doctrine

expressed in the beautiful hymn of Cleanthes, the successor of Zeno, the only fragment of his writings that has come down to us—

Lead me, O Zeus, and thou O Destiny, in the work to which I am divinely chosen, and I shall follow, not unwilling; but even if I refuse and become evil, no less must I follow thee.

“Thus,” writes Dr. Caird in his *Evolution of Theology in the Greek Philosophers*, “the moral independence of the Stoic converts itself into a consciousness of unity with God, in which all caprice and wilfulness are lost; and the individual becomes strong in himself simply as he becomes conscious that he is the organ of the divine will. . . The Stoics both set the problem of freedom, and showed in what direction the solution of it was to be sought.”

Book V opens with a wholesome admonition—

In the morning, when you feel loth to rise, fall back upon the thought—I am rising for man’s work. Why make a grievance of setting about that for which I was born?

It is full of admirable counsels—

Whatever comes upon a man, nature has formed him to bear.

Things material cannot touch the soul; soul is self-swayed.

Live with the gods. And he lives with the gods whoever presents to them his soul acceptant of their dispensations and busy about the will of God, even that particle of Zeus, which Zeus gives to every man for his controller and governor, to wit, his mind and reason.

Book VI is mainly concerned with characteristic speculations as to the physical constitution of things; but again and again the practical idea of duty emerges—separate, supreme.

Upward, downward, course the elements, but the motion of virtue is none of these! Of some diviner mould, it pursues the even tenour of courses unimagined.

Book VII opens with the old question, “What is evil?” but not much is offered towards an answer. The most

interesting part of this book is that in which Marcus consoles himself and seeks to fortify his own position by a series of extracts from the authors whom he most loved and studied—Plato, Antisthenes, Euripides, Aristophanes, Epictetus.

This is his commentary on the saying of Plato, twice quoted by Epictetus—

No soul wilfully misses truth. No, nor justice either, nor wisdom, nor charity, nor any other excellence. It is essential to remember this continually; it will make you gentler with everyone.

A characteristic note!

Let me add the following:—

Herein is the way of perfection: to live out each day as one's last with no fever, no torpor, no acting a part.

The immortal gods do not lose patience with having to bear, age after age, with the froward generations of men.

I fear I can allow myself but few more quotations. In the opening of Book IX sin is thus defined:—

To be unjust is to sin . . . and he who transgresses the will of nature sins against the primal deity. And to lie is to sin against the same godhead. He who sins, sins against himself.

In the three concluding books the nature and destinies of the soul are discussed; the deepest depths are sounded, the serenest heights are scaled. The eternal realities—God and the soul, made of one substance in the beginning and ever yearning and tending to re-union—is the recurring thought.

In Book XI we have the thrilling passage in which Christianity is for the only time referred to.

O for a soul ready, when the hour of dissolution comes for extinction, or dispersion, or survival. But such readiness must proceed from inward conviction, not come of mere perversity like the Christians, but of a temper rational and grave, and, if it is to convince others, unostentatious.

That Marcus Aurelius should have persecuted Christianity is, says J. S. Mill, "one of the most tragical facts in all history." The fact is undeniable, nor do I think it needs glozing over. Politically, there was no alternative. By the time of Marcus the new faith had become too strong to be ignored or scornfully tolerated. It was a question of life and death between the old order and the new. Stoicism and Roman civilization could not live alongside of the new faith. Not as yet could men be expected to see that there was room for all that was truest in Stoicism and noblest in the empire in the ample bosom of a world-embracing church. It does, indeed, seem tragical that a man so pure, so just, so noble, so Christ-like, should speak but once of Christ's followers, among whom, all unknowingly, he was one of the best, and that once with ignorant prejudice and contempt.

But the wrong that Marcus did to the Christians was transient, and was amply atoned by the benefits that accrued to the Church through the system of which he was practically the last, as he was the most eloquent exponent. Christianity rested on a fact, and inspired the world with a new motive-power; but it had no philosophy of its own, no ethical theory worked out in detail. These it found in Stoicism, and readily assimilated, thrilling them through with an impulse unknown before, and illuminating them with the glow of immortality!

Not that I can accept, without demur, the statement that "good Aurelius" was without hope of a life beyond the grave. I venture to take exception to the summing up of Dr. Rendall. "In his conviction," he says, "Marcus Aurelius never seems to waver; death, wherever he has occasion to give clear and simple utterance to his own thoughts, is always a dissolution of being, that is, the end of action, impulse, will, or thought, that terminates every

human activity and bounds our brief span of life with an eternity that contains neither hint, nor hope, nor dread of future conscious being."

Now it seems to me that the very passages to which he refers to justify this conclusion tend in a contrary direction. Marcus says :

In departing from this world, if, indeed, there be gods, there is nothing to be afraid of, for gods will not let you fall into evil.

Again :

You embark. You make life's voyage, come to port, step out. If for another life, there are gods everywhere, there as here. If out of all sensation, then pains and pleasures will solicit you no more, and you will drudge no more for the carnal shell which is so unworthy of its ministering servant. For the spirit is mind and god ; the body refuse clay.

Finally, let us hear his formal statement of the case in the twelfth book. He asks how it can be that

Some men, very good men, who through religious lives have been most intimate with the divinity, when they have once died should never exist again, but should be completely extinguished ?

And this is his reply :

But if this be so, be assured that if it ought to have been otherwise the gods would have done it . . . but because it is not so, if, in fact, it is not so, be thou convinced that it ought not to have been so.

It is, indeed, true that "immortality has been brought to light by the Gospel." It may be true, also, that the metaphysical basis of Stoicism affords no logical standing ground from which to formulate by argument a doctrine of individual survival ; yet would I fain believe that the saintly philosophic emperor was among those who died in faith, not having received the promises, and that, in a higher sense than Horace's, he would have exclaimed, "*Non omnis moriar.*" He did say, in the closing words of

his book, "Serenely take your leave, serene as he who gives you your discharge."

To me these are words of hope, if not of faith; scarcely the words of one who was assured that he was passing into nothingness.

I have attempted no biography of Marcus Aurelius. You will find the leading facts of his life adequately set forth in Dr. Rendall's book,* and it is interesting to note how various passages in the *Meditations* throw light on the character of the lonely emperor, who, from the very splendour of his self-repression, must have been somewhat of an enigma to his contemporaries, though none the less an object of veneration and passionate devotion. His was a sad, strenuous, lonely life; yet throughout the *Meditations* there is not one indication of self-pity, not one note of complaint. Nay, there is more often a note of suppressed triumph. "Man's mirth," he cries, "is to do man's proper work. . . . To every man his own good cheer; be mine health in the inner self." The Stoic emperor lived and died for duty and for God. He practised what he preached; or rather, say, his preaching was the mere record of his practice. A man who hated war, he was compelled by circumstances to become a leader of armies, and was doomed to wear out a frame that had never been robust in endless and weary conflicts with savage tribes.

He was not sixty years of age when he died, utterly exhausted, on the 17th of March, A.D. 180. I may be allowed to conclude the story in the words of Dr. Rendall:—

His end was, as his life, deliberate, unflinching, resolute. Six days of inability to eat or drink, through which the habit of duty still struggled with the failing body; the summons to his friends;

* Also in a most luminous picture of Marcus and his time in W. Pater's *Marius the Epicurean*.

words, tinged with a sad irony, upon the vanity of life; the passionless farewell—"Why weep for me? Think of the army and its safety. I do but go on before. Farewell!" Then the brief wandering of delirium—*Hac luctuosi belli opera sunt*; then the covered head and the everlasting rest. Rome forgot the emperor in the man. "Marcus, my father! Marcus, my brother! Marcus, my son!" cried the bereaved citizens. At his funeral the ordinary lamentations were omitted; and men said to one another—"He whom the gods lent us has rejoined the gods"

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